JESUS ALL HOLY

Jesus All Holy

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Preface

The object of my first little book, "Jesus All Good," was to excite you to unbounded confidence in Our Lord Jesus Christ. It prepared the way for this new one which aims at carrying you on to the imitation of "Jesus All Holy."

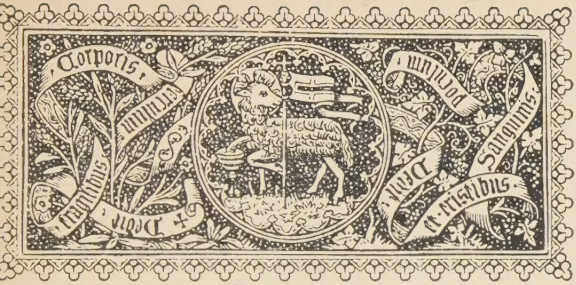
First of all, it is the most fitting homage you can pay Him; He Himself demands it of you: "Be holy, because I am holy." (Lev. 11. 45.)

You cannot imitate one whom you do not love, in whom you have no confidence: but with these feelings of love and confidence the imitation of the beloved one at once becomes less difficult.

I do not hide from you that imitation is not so easy as love and confidence. Perhaps you will not relish this book as

much as you did its predecessor. But though we must not always seek what is pleasant but rather what is profitable, I shall do my best to make the imitation of Jesus as easy and pleasant as may be. Not, indeed, that I shall take you to Heaven in a carriage. The road there is too narrow to admit of carriages: but at least I shall try to clear away some of the largest stumbling blocks and dissipate some of the biggest bogeys which have risen up no one knows whence, to frighten the timid and make the road seem to them full of pitfalls and terrors.

So we will together consider "Jesus All Holy," and with the same good dispositions with which we considered "Jesus All Good." May the good work He then began in your heart, be brought by Him to perfection in all peace and joy. Amen.



Jesus All Holy

CHAPTER I

THE IMITATION OF JESUS IS NECESSARY

That our destiny is not wholly accomplished here below is an incontrovertible truth deeply rooted in the human soul. This world is but a passage: twenty or thirty years will bring us to the grave. But the grave is not our goal; it is rather the cradle of a new and eternally blessed life. That life awaits us in a better country in the Bosom of God. This truth taught us

by reason and faith, needs no proof; our souls are absolutely convinced of it. And now as we are agreed upon this fundamental point of another life and of the eternal kingdom awaiting us, it will be well to ask one question.

Do you sincerely desire to reach that blessed country?—for you might by straying from the right way, reach at last the kingdom of everlasting woe. Do you really desire as a reasonable being, the possession of eternal joy? Then lay this well to heart, namely, that there is but one road by which you can attain to eternal happiness; and that is the imitation of Jesus Christ. The Apostle tells you so most clearly: "For Whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be made conformable to the image of His Son." (Rom. 8. 29.)

Those, therefore, who would be among the elect of God, must be made like His only begotten Son. As no one

can attain to eternal salvation without being predestined thereto, so no one can be predestined without resembling Jesus Christ: it were folly to expect salvation without this resemblance. And in fact how could predestination, the great proof of God's love and special tenderness, be given by Him to a being whom He did not love? And how could the Eternal Father love any being who was not like unto His well beloved Son?

The heart of God is so noble that He can love nothing which is less than Himself. If He loves any other, He still only loves Himself in some likeness of Himself, some image which more or less perfectly represents Him. If you have in your room several portraits of great men or of those dear to you, you appreciate and care for them. But if among these there is your own likeness, it attracts your eyes oftener than any of the

others; you look at it with special and greater pleasure. It may not be the most beautiful of the portraits. What matter. It is your own and so you enjoy it more than the others.

Think, then, with what ardor the Eternal Father loves His only begotten Son, in Whom He sees His own perfect natural likeness: "The brightness of His glory, and the figure of His substance" (Heb. 1. 3), a likeness infinitely beautiful, because it exactly reproduces the infinite beauty of God. This, then, is the motive for which He loves His creatures. He loves them, too, in proportion as they are more or less faithful likenesses of His Divine Word. That Divine Word like the sun, pours down His divine rays upon His creatures as upon so many crystal mirrors which reflect from all parts the brightness of His light. In loving

creatures, therefore, God loves His own Divine Self in them.

If this is the true cause of God's love for us, what consequence follows? This: that if He sees in us many of the features of His Son, He loves us much: if but few, He loves us but little: if He sees in us features unlike, absolutely contrary, He detests, He rejects, He condemns us. All the more that in this last case we do all that depends on us to nullify the effects of the grand work of the Incarnation.

Do you believe that Christ not only descended from Heaven, but also deigned to live a life full of sorrow and pain? And was it only to redeem us from the slavery of hell? For that purpose it would have sufficed if He had for one moment humbled Himself, in our stead, before His Father, returning at once to the Kingdom of

His glory. Why, then, did He choose to be born, to live and suffer and die as the rest of men? St. Peter tells you why: "For unto this are you called, because Christ also suffered for us, leaving you an example that you should follow His steps." (1 Pet. 2. 21.)

Now, when this splendid example is despised and thrust aside by us we frustrate, to a great extent, one of the chief ends of the Incarnation. How, then, can we hope that the Eternal Father should regard us with favor and should be willing to admit us one day into the Kingdom of His glory? Besides, how can we then call ourselves Christians? Is Baptism all that is needed to make us Christians? "No," replies Saint Cyprian, "the Christian who is not a faithful imitator of Christ deserves not to bear so glorious a name." St. Paul also teaches us the supreme necessity of imitating Christ

if we wish to be true Christians, when he urges us to bear "about in our body the mortification of Jesus, that the life also of Jesus may be made manifest in our bodies." (2 Cor. 4. 10.)

Our Lord Himself uses an even more forcible expression to impress upon us this truth when He tells us that we must form one great tree, of which He is the trunk and we the branches nourished by the same life-giving sap. "I am the vine, you the branches: he that abideth in Me, and I in him, the same beareth much fruit." (John 15. 5.) In vain shall we think ourselves to be Christians, belonging to Jesus Christ, if we do not live by Him, attached to Him and fed by His spiritual sustenance. "If any one abide not in Me: he shall be cast forth as a branch, and shall wither, and they shall gather him up, and cast him into the fire, and he burneth." (John 15. 6.)

Nor shall he ever be transplanted to the Heavenly Kingdom.

"To that Kingdom none ever reached that believed not in Christ, neither before nor after He had nailed Himself to the tree. But behold many cry Christ! Christ! who at the judgment will be far less close to Him, than some that knew not Christ at all." (Dante.)

You see thus how worthless are those religions now so much in vogue, calling themselves religions of conscience, of duty, of honor, and others of like nature. These religions are worth little for this world, and nothing for Heaven. They are worth nothing for this world in spite of all their high-sounding names. Take away the idea of God; not of a vague unreal God, but of the true God, the legislator whose all-seeing Eye scans the innermost recesses of our heart, and whose dread

Justice awaits us beyond the grave, to reward or punish us according to our deserts; take away, I say, the idea of such a God, what solid foundation is there for morality? What sanction upholds it, what force sustains man, enabling him to make head against the onslaught of his passions? These religions are the inventions of men, they are not the religion of God. The devil does not fear them, indeed he smiles upon them.

Then they are worth nothing for Heaven. In that blessed Kingdom of Christ none may enter but the followers of Christ. Should those others venture to present themselves at the gate of Paradise, crying out like the foolish virgins: "Lord, Lord, open to us" (Matt. 25. 11), St. Peter who keeps the keys, will hasten to the door saying: "Wait a moment, have you a ticket of admission? Let me see your pass.

What is written upon it? 'Whose image and inscription is this?'" (Matt. 22. 20.) And then they will begin to say: "I have followed the maxims of Cato and Seneca; and I have followed pure Reason with Kant. And St. Peter will answer: "All these religions I know not, nor ye either."—"Not know us! Why, we are members of learned academies, we have our degrees and many letters after our names."—"Amen, I say to you, I know you not. All your titles have no value here."

"Have you learned the Catechism? Did you put it in practise? Did you imitate Jesus Christ? If you did, then come in; if not, away with you, I know you not!" And the door will be inexorably shut in their faces.

Now if this is so, what is the practical consequence we should draw? That which Thomas à Kempis tells

us: "Let it then, be our chief study to meditate on the life of Jesus Christ," and he adds: "The teaching of Christ surpasseth all the teachings of the Saints; and he that hath His Spirit, will find therein a hidden manna. But he that would fully and with relish understand the words of Christ, must study to conform his whole life to Him." (Imit. 1. 1.)

Ah! but some will object: "Thomas à Kempis was nothing but an obscure mediæval monk. He knew nothing of the world, and was quite right to speak thus: I, on the other hand! . . ." Well, even you—have you more ideas in your mind, or more work on your hands, than the great lawyer Raymond Troplong, who was first President of the Court of Paris, Senator and President of the French Senate under Napoleon III?

Listen to what he says at the close

of his long life of eighty years: you will perceive that he thought very much the same thing as the obscure mediæval monk. "When a man has read or studied much, and is about to close a long career, he perceives more clearly than ever, that there is nothing true and solid but the Catechism; and none other than Jesus Christ!"

The sentiments of the great French writer, Chateaubriand, who had also been a minister of the state were precisely similar. He applied them not only to the individual, but to the whole of society. It was the year 1848, during the famous days of June, which swept away the monarchy of Louis Philippe and established the French Republic. The roar of cannon was heard through the streets of Paris, while not far from the Church of Sainte Clotilde, the long and glorious career of the author of the "Génie du Chris-

tianisme" was drawing to a close. A few friends surrounded his bed, a mournful silence reigned in the quarter, broken only by the sound of distant firing. On a sudden the echoes of the tragedy became louder, and struck the ear of the dying man. Taking his Crucifix in his trembling hands, he gazed fixedly upon it and exclaimed: "O poor modern society! you change your king at every moment, and withal you cannot realize that Jesus Christ alone can save you. Behold my King!" With these words he fell asleep in the Lord.

CHAPTER II

THE IMITATION OF JESUS IS EASY

When Moses was about to enter with his people into the Promised Land to take possession of it, he sent forth twelve spies to visit the country. These after forty days returned, and gave the most glowing accounts of what they had seen. They showed the people wonderful pomegranates and figs from the land, and a magnificent bunch of grapes which could only be carried by slinging it upon a pole which two men carried on their shoulders.

But they hastened to add: "The land is rich, flowing with milk and honey, but if you knew how strong are its people; how great and well fortified its cities; how terrible its defenders! We poor unfortunates! Their stature alone fills you with fear; we saw giants in comparison with whom we seemed to be locusts. Unfortunate wretches that we are!"

At this fearful news a lamentable wail rose up throughout the camp, and a weeping that lasted throughout the night with murmuring against Moses and Aaron. The whole people cried out to be led back into Egypt rather than brave so desperate an enterprise. But not long afterwards it was clearly seen that this frightening story was only the effect of imaginations heated by fear.

Now the same may be said of the idea that some people have of the Chris-

tian life, which is nothing else but the imitation of Christ. They say: "The Christian life is beautiful, no one can deny it. The imitation of Christ is necessary, but how arduous, how difficult! It is not the road for such as we. It were better to go back to Egypt, to walk again in the ways of the world." This is nothing else than the language of fear. Let us calmly examine the case.

And first of all, we must agree that the inclination to imitate what is superior is most natural to all reasonable creatures. Now as all reasonable creatures tend towards perfection they feel themselves impelled to draw near to those above them, and as far as possible to God Himself, the type and the source of all excellence and perfection. Unfortunately, both angels and the first man in their striving to become like God, instead of reaching perfec-

tion, drew down upon themselves a terrible ruin. "Not indeed," as St. Bernard observes, "because of their desire to imitate God, but because they wished to imitate Him wrongly." The angels instead of wishing to reproduce His goodness and His love, strove to emulate His greatness: "I will ascend above the heights of the clouds, I will be like the Most High." (Is. 14. 14.) They were, therefore, case down into the abyss of everlasting infamy. In like manner man instead of imitating the meekness of God, aimed at possessing His omniscience, the special characteristic of uncreated Wisdom: "To be as gods knowing good and evil." (Gen. 3. 5.) Ignorance and error were among the other penalties of his crime. The holy Doctor proceeds: "And what did the Eternal Word? Moved with compassion for man's misfortune, He took upon Himself the charge of pro-

viding a remedy thereto. The ruin of man, He seemed to say, has come from his desire to imitate Me wrongly. I will take upon Myself such a state, that man may imitate Me, not only without hurt to himself, but that he may even find his salvation in such imitation." And this He accomplished in becoming Incarnate. "And the Word was made Flesh." (John 1. 14.) He deigned to become Himself like unto man, in order that man might make himself like unto God, thus satisfying his own natural inclination.

Yes, you say, inclination on the one hand for greatness and perfection always attract: but repugnance on the other, because there will be much that is arduous and difficult in the task, as nature will have to be often denied in the imitation and following of Christ.

It may be so. But those difficulties far from terrifying the magnanimous,

should be to them rather a fresh stimulus. When David was flying from the violence and persecution of his perfidious son Absalom he found it more difficult to dismiss his faithful followers, than to induce some of them to follow him. When he would have persuaded Ethai to go back to his home, that generous follower answered the King saying: "As the Lord liveth, and as my lord the King liveth, in what place soever thou shalt be, lord my King, either in death or in life, there will thy servant be!" (2 Kings 15. 21.)

Besides, Jesus is not only the King who commands; He is likewise the Captain who goes before: because in all battles He leads the way, and takes for Himself the hardest part. Will it be so arduous to follow Him?

When Jonathan resolved to go by night, he himself alone, with his armour-bearer, to surprise the camp of the

Philistines, what was the reply of the valiant youth to such a proposal? Did he point out on what a foolhardy enterprise they were to start, and refuse to brave the useless death to which it must certainly lead? Oh, no! His armour-bearer saith to him: "Do all that pleaseth thy mind: go whither thou wilt, and I will be with thee whereso-ever thou hast a mind. . . .

And Jonathan said to his armour-bearer: Let us go up, follow me, for the Lord hath delivered them into the hands of Israel.

And Jonathan went up creeping on his hands and feet, and his armour-bearer after him. And some fell before Jonathan, others his armour-bearer slew as he followed him." (1 Kings 14. 7. 12. 13.) Can we not do the same with Jesus?

We need not go further than our own times for examples of confidence

in trusted leaders. In the beginning of the last century did we not see the great Corsican leader overthrowing empires and thrones, harrying Europe with fire and sword? His soldiers followed him everywhere with enthusiasm and blind fanaticism. Even to this day, nearly a hundred years after his death, the very name of Napoleon is like an electric spark to many.

And that demagogue Garibaldi, with his carbine ever in his hand, destroying thrones and altars, how large a following of misguided youth was he always able to draw after him, what squadrons of red shirts always under his orders. Surely life under him was anything but pleasant: labors, privations, hardships, dangers of all sorts had to be borne; it was the life of brigands! What matter! At the bare sound of his name, at the cry of Viva Garibaldi! all difficulties vanished, warlike fire was

enkindled and the enemy's bullets were faced with joyful alacrity.

But I am ashamed of having even mentioned these names, now that I reflect upon it, now that I am about to apply them to the matter we have in hand. What have I done? Whose names have I dared to utter? What comparisons are these? Pardon me, O good Jesus! great and holy and divine King, pardon me!

Alas! that it should be true! A vulgar demagogue can find hordes of ruffians who cheerfully let themselves be led by him to the slaughter, and Thou canst hardly gather together a handful of faithful followers, who will go after Thee, on the road to victory.

I purposely say, on the road to victory. For we are not expected to lay down our lives. There is not even any risk to run: for there are two vital differences between our case and that of

the above-mentioned captains. First, those captains might easily promise victory; but they could not positively ensure it, for the issue of earthly battles is always uncertain. Whilst on the contrary Jesus guarantees victory. Under Him the mere fighting is in itself a victory and triumph. Not only does He promise victory, but by the unction of His grace, He so sweetens the bitterness of the battle, that fighting itself never becomes too painful. The natural repugnance of our nature to all self-conquest is changed, in the long run, into something like pleasure.

The other difference is that these earthly captains while exposing themselves to hardship, mostly labor on their own account; the consequences of defeat fall upon them, while the fruits of victory are gathered chiefly by them. Jesus on the contrary bore the most arduous of the labors only for us. He

embraced poverty, humiliations, sufferings of every kind, only to encourage us to endure them. For this only He willed to suffer them all, to taste the whole bitterness of them all. For Himself, He had no need of them.

He has done much more than a king who commands his subjects, or a captain who goes before his soldiers. He has done as a mother does, who, seeing that her sick child has not courage to take the medicine ordered, tastes it herself to induce the little one to swallow it. Nay, Jesus has done much more. For the mother only pretends to take the medicine, or at most she only tastes a few drops and gives the rest to her child.

Jesus has done just the reverse. He took for Himself the great chalice of bitterness, and drinking it to the very dregs, He gives it to us still wet from His lips. "Take it," He says to us,

"do but taste my drink: for my sake, swallow the few drops that still cling to the cup."

Shall we refuse to drink of His cup? Oh, surely in that case, as there is no mother so tender as Jesus, so there would be no sons in all the world so unnatural as we. Had we ever so little love for our loving God, there would be no need to seek other reasons to make the imitation of Him sweet and easy to us. With love imitation naturally follows. When we love any one, all in that person pleases us. His person, his dress, his speech, his behaviour, his actions, everything in short. Being pleased with everything we insensibly imitate him in everything. Little by little we take up his ways, his manners, his behaviour, and so great is the power of love to produce resemblance between those who love each other, that we do all this naturally, hardly perceiv-

ing it, and with an indescribable sweetness.

Now tell me truly, do you really love Jesus? How long has He knocked at the door of your heart? "Behold," He says, "I stand at the gate and knock." (Apoc. 3. 20.) Have you yet opened to Him? He is your Saviour, your Father, your Brother, your Friend, your Spouse. Do you then love Him? If you do not as yet, then meditate awhile upon these titles of His: little by little you cannot fail to be inflamed with love for Him.

But if, as I hope and believe, you love Him already then see that you yourself are reflected in Him as in a glass. Copy Him, make yourself into a portrait of Him. To the true lover of Jesus this work will be not only easy, but sweet. All the more if you lift your eyes to the beautiful crown preparing for you in His eternal Kingdom.

The very thought of this will change all bitter into sweet.

But suppose all this is not true? If, after having labored to lead a Christian life in the imitation of Jesus Christ, there should be no future life after all? Miserable indeed should we be! This thought sometimes takes hold even of good souls as a dark temptation. When it seizes the mind it takes the breath away, and is like a douche of cold water upon the heart, putting out all warmth of love, and chilling the spirit of devotion. It is like a frightful spectre barring the way. We must get rid of this phantom, which is as imaginary as the giants of the Promised Land seen by the terrified imagination of the spies. It is easy to rid yourself of this vain fear by an act of faith: "Credo in vitam aeternam." Besides even if there were a doubt as to the future life, or the existence of Heaven or

hell, it would still be wiser to lead a good life. There would be nothing to lose, either in this world or the next.

Whereas those who live a bad life lose all here below, and stand to lose all for all eternity.

CHAPTER III

JESUS GLORIFYING HIS ETERNAL FATHER

Let us therefore begin with alacrity to study this Divine Exemplar. The first thing to be noticed in Him is His Eyes uplifted to Heaven. His bodily eyes first, for it is often said of Him in the Gospel that He raised His eyes to Heaven; and still more the eyes of His Soul, for in all His actions His intention was always one and the same, namely, to procure the glory of His Father.

From His first entrance into the world He hid His divine glory, covering it with the veil of His tender Infant Body, in order that the glory of His Father might more resplendently shine forth, and that the Angels might with more reason fill the Heavens with their sublime song: "Glory to God in the highest." Throughout the whole of His Life too, see how He annihilated His most sacred Humanity before the Father. How He hid Himself, how He retired that the Father alone might appear. He never sought His own glory, "I seek not my own glory." (John 8. 50.) He said that His glory as man was a mere nothing compared with His Father's glory. "If I glorify myself, my glory is nothing; it is My Father that glorifieth me." (John 8. 54.) and He adds that in all things He had but one aim, the good pleasure of His Father: "I do know Him, and do

keep His word." (John 8. 55.) If He asks the Father to glorify the Son, it is only that He may refer that glory to the Father. "Father, the hour is come, glorify Thy Son, that Thy Son may glorify Thee." (John 17. 1.)

The whole life of Jesus was a perpetual hymn to the glory of the Father, a continual repetition of the Gloria in Excelsis, sung by angels at His Birth. In closing His mortal life He could say with unbounded filial confidence: "I have glorified Thee on the earth: I have finished the work which Thou gavest Me to do. And now glorify Thou Me, O Father, with Thyself, with the glory which I had, before the world was, with Thee." (John 17. 4. 5.) As He practised, so also He taught: He "began to do and to teach." (Acts. 1. 1.) "The light of thy body is thy eye. If thy eye be single, thy whole body will be lightsome: but if it be evil, thy body also

will be darksome." (Luke 11. 34.) "Take heed that you do not your justice before men, to be seen by them, otherwise you shall not have a reward of your Father Who is in heaven." (Matt. 6. 1.) If you seek to please God alone, you must hide your good works from men "and my Father Who seeth in secret will repay thee." (Matt. 6. 6.)

Such was the practise, and such the teaching of Jesus. Are you doing likewise? Instead of seeking the glory of God, in our actions, how often are they done for vainglory or from human respect. What disorder and folly is this! The Lord protests that He is jealous of His glory, nor will He in any way give it to another. "I am the Lord, this is my name: I will not give my glory to another." (Is. 42. 8.)

In all the works of God there are two things: utility and honor. Utility

He allows to us. Honor He reserves for Himself. Even in the good works we do He claims for Himself the whole glory of them, and why? Because we can only do them with those means He gives us in creating us, and by those helps which He never fails to grant us in doing them. He has made us "higher than all nations which He hath created, to His own praise, and name, and glory." (Deut. 26. 19.) "And therefore, O Lord," says St. Augustine, "he who desires to be praised for what is Thy gift, is a robber, and is like Lucifer, who willed to rob Thee of Thy glory." And in proportion to the outrage offered to God by vainglory, is the harm it does to ourselves. This thief robs two beings at once, and with both hands. While robbing God of His glory, it robs us of the merit of our good actions, as it robbed the Pharisees, who did their good works to be seen and

esteemed of men." Our Lord repeatedly assures us of this: "Amen I say to you, they have received their reward." (Matt. 6. 5.)

You also have received your reward; in that action you did so carefully, in that mental or manual work, accomplished to gain a little praise, a little glory. Cling to your reward; you can expect no other. You must be easily pleased if you can be satisfied to be paid in such base coin. For after all, what is human praise or glory? Dante tells us that "worldly fame is nothing but a breath of wind, blowing from one quarter, and then another; changing its name with its direction." Sometimes, even, it happens that instead of the praise you hoped for, you have only reaped contempt and blame. Your aim was vainglory, and whether you obtained it or not, you have nothing to expect from God. What a foolish trader

you have been! You took great pains with body or soul, perhaps even with both, to do those good works; then vainglory robbed you of them, and the prize owing to them, leaving you with only a handful of rubbish. And as though that were not enough, you have also deserved a chastisement. It is the intention which determines the quality of actions; if the intention is good the action will be good, if the intention is evil the action will be evil, and therefore deserving of chastisement. You have been a thief, and thieves must be punished.

But, you object, if a little vanity is insensibly mixed up in our good works, does it take from them all merit and make them worthy of punishment? No, I do not say quite so much. There are three kinds of intention: the crooked, the right and the pure. The crooked intention is that which has for its object vainglory, or any other disorderly

thing. Works done with this intention are radically wrong; they are bad works, and therefore worthy of punishment. The right intention is that which has for its object the glory of God. Works done with this intention are radically and substantially good; therefore worthy of reward. It may happen sometimes, that though a work was begun purely for the glory of God, there may, during the course of it, creep into the soul some feeling of vainglory or other disorderly affection. This does not make the action absolutely bad, but only defective. Its merit is not altogether lost but only diminished. Finally, if in the work undertaken with a right intention, that intention remains pure, unmixed with any disorderly motive or affection, then the intention is not only right, but pure, and is clearly the most perfect. Hence a good action well done and with a pure inten-

tion is like a sparkling and precious gem; the same action done with a right intention, but slightly mixed with vain complacency, is a gem marked with some little blemishes which detract from its beauty and value; while an action done with a crooked intention though it may appear a gem, is nothing but a bit of glass, and you will be punished for attempting to pass it off as a jewel.

That may be very true you say. It is right to seek first the glory of God; but how can one avoid seeking also to please men? Above all if these actions refer to others it is all important to please them. You must distinguish two sorts of actions relating to your neighbor. There are some in which usefulness predominates; such as education, teaching, preaching, writing books. Now this usefulness will be difficult of attainment unless the way is prepared for it by pleasure. If the master does not

please, he will do little or no good to his pupils. If you do not please when teaching from the platform or the pulpit, you may be certain to speak to empty benches. If your book is heavy or tiresome, no matter how pious and learned it may be, no one but the moths will feed upon it. Therefore you must strive to please in speaking or writing: to a certain extent that end is right and necessary. But do not stop there. Seek to give pleasure as a means of doing good, not as the end for which alone you work. Let pleasure be always secondary to usefulness, let the form be agreeable but the matter solid. Always keep in view your neighbor's real advantage, and thus you will at the same time give true glory to God.

There are other works in which pleasure predominates, such as drawing, painting, embroidery and other works

of art. In these you can more freely seek to give pleasure. Paint and draw and work in the most pleasing way that you can, there is no harm in taking delight in the pleasure you give to others by these works. Only beware of vain complacency. It would be vain complacency to rest altogether in yourself, thrilling long and joyfully at the thought of your success, like a child who keeps sucking and enjoying a sweet. But that is not vain complacency which makes you rise at once from the pleasure of a successful work to God, the fountain of all beauty and perfection, to God who gave you the power to make something pleasing to men. Be grateful to Him—give Him all the glory. You will cast out vain complacency by the thought: "Christ did not please Himself." (Rom. 15. 3.) He rejoiced in the wonders He worked with His Father's help, and to Him

therefore He rendered thanks: "Father, I give Thee thanks, that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always." (John 11. 41. 42.)

No doubt you will ask how is it possible to prevent vainglory and self-complacency? At the beginning of each action direct it and offer it unreservedly to God; so that if vainglory should enter into your soul you can say: "You are too late, the work has already been begun for God and given to Him." If on the one hand you must not let its importunities wrest from you the smallest concession, on the other you must not for fear of them, leave off the good work which was undertaken with a good intention. Turn a deaf ear to its suggestions, saying with St. Bernard: "I did not begin for thee: for fear of thee I shall not desist."

Now does it not clearly seem to you

that all this teaching which I have been explaining to you, besides being founded upon the oracles of faith, is also founded on the principles of sane reason? Moreover, is there anything hard or difficult in the imitation of Jesus on this point? To make this matter easier reflect awhile upon the vanity of human glory. What indeed is human glory? To win it the soldier braves danger and death, the student pores over his books nor heeds the flight of time. They who desire it and they who have it both lose their peace of mind. The struggle to acquire it is no less bitter than the fear of losing it. And after all, it is but an illusion bought with strenuous labor; a vapor pursued amid unceasing toil and sweat. To the living it is an object of ceaseless envy; to the dead a sound they can no longer hear; to all the scourge of human pride.

CHAPTER IV

JESUS OF ONE MIND WITH THE FATHER

In all things as we have already seen, Jesus sought only the glory of His Father. The root of this sentiment was His intimate union with the Father. This union was not only the unity of nature, He and the Father being one (John 10. 30.), a unity therefore which is inimitable: but it was also perfect union of will in His human nature, and this is the union which, to a certain extent, even we poor creatures can and must imitate.

His first thought, the first cry of His soul on coming into the world was to do the Will of His Father, as St. Paul tells us: "Wherefore when He cometh into the world, He saith: Sacrifice and oblation Thou wouldest not: but a body Thou hast fitted to me. Holocausts for sin did not please Thee. Then said I: Behold I come: in the head of the Book it is written of Me: that I should do Thy Will, O God!" (Heb. 10. 5. 6. 7.) The Will of the Father was so thoroughly one with His own that It had become His very food: as He told His Disciples at Jacob's well: "My meat is to do the Will of Him that sent Me, that I may perfect His work." (John 4. 34.) To conform to the Will of the Father, He hid His Divine attributes and powers in an obscure workshop. For the same end, He was subject to His Virgin Mother and to His foster father. Also for that

end He submitted during His Passion to the iniquitous judges and His barbarous executioners. In one word, His Divine gaze was always fixed upon His Father to consult and discover His Divine Will in all things. All that He did, all that He suffered, from the cradle to the grave, not only substantially, but in the minutest circumstance, was nothing else but a perpetual homage to the Divine Will of God. "I do always the things that please Him." (John 8. 29.) If on one occasion only, He showed the natural repugnance of His human nature to the bitter sufferings that overwhelmed Him, it was that His generosity in submitting to His Father's Will should more clearly shine forth: "Nevertheless, not My Will but Thine be done." (Luke 22. 42.)

Following the example of Jesus, we must in like manner conform our wills to the Will of God. That Will is

made known to us in three ways. First, by the Commandments of God and the Church. Secondly, by means of our Superiors who hold the place of God in our regard. Thirdly, by means of all those things that happen to us, whether in prosperity or adversity. Under the first head we clearly see how reasonable it is to do the Will of God. Is He not our Master, our Creator? Did we create ourselves? "Know ye that the Lord He is God: He made us, and not we ourselves." (Ps. 99. 3.) We belong to Him therefore not to ourselves. We have a Master Who is God. The modern theory that man is born free, is false. Man is not born free, he is born the servant of God his great Master. If therefore God is our Master, and we are His servants, is it not reasonable that we should do His blessed Will? Is it for the Master to do the will of the

servant, and not rather for servants to do the will of their Master?

Having been created by God, man depends upon God in all relating to his creation, in all that he has received from God; in other words, in all that he has.

By his intellect he depends upon God. Therefore it is false to say that he is at liberty to believe what he chooses. If God proposes to his belief any truth, no matter how mysterious, he is obliged to hold it, even though he should not understand it.

By his will, he depends upon God. Therefore it is false to say he is free to do as he pleases. If God imposes upon him a positive law over and above the natural law, he is bound to obey it, even though it may be burdensome to him.

By both soul and body he depends upon God. Therefore it is not true to

say that he is free to embrace any religion he chooses, or to shake himself free from all religion. If God shows him in what manner He wishes to be honored, in that manner and in no other is he bound to honor Him, in both soul and body, by inward and outward worship.

Do these grave thoughts ever cross the minds of free-thinkers? In practical life too as they acknowledge no divine law, they soon become in spite of all their fine words, not only free thinkers but free sinners as well. Was there a time when they believed and loved their Faith? when they would have wished the cross to shadow their last resting place? when their souls, now darkened by the clouds of unbelief and thirsting in vain for peace, were once pure and calm in the friendship of God? Let us pray that when in the darkness of the night, the thought of

death with its supreme peril troubles their soul, it may wring from them a cry for pardon, a yearning for faith that will bring them to the Cross of Jesus, to the embrace of His outstretched arms and forgiving love.

By the mercy of God those for whom I write are not of the class of free-thinkers and free livers. They are generally submissive to the Commandments of God and the Church. They may, however, sometimes find it difficult to obey the orders of Superiors. But here too it is a question of obeying the Will of God, because all authority comes from God and from Him alone. All opposition to authority is therefore an opposition to God Himself. "Let every soul be subject to higher powers: for there is no power but from God: and those that are, are ordained of God. Therefore he that resisteth the power

resisteth the ordinance of God." (Rom. 13. 1. 2.)

But how hard to submit one's own will to another's! Quite true; but also what an excellent thing! By this submission of the will, by the adhesion of the intellect required for the perfection of obedience, you offer to God a holocaust of all that is noblest in human nature. Can anything give more solid happiness? As for the difficulties involved in the practise of obedience they are smoothed away by the great example of Christ. They vanish on the threshold of the holy house of Nazareth. Oh, yes! I grant it often costs a good deal not to be able to do as one chooses. But see within those poor walls the Eternal Word, Wisdom Incarnate, being ruled by others like a child that can do nothing by itself. And whom does He obey? Two of

His own creatures, privileged beings it is true but still infinitely beneath Him. And in what does He obey? In all the common work which has to be done in the house of the poorest. And for how long? For the thirty years during which He lived hidden in that poor house.

Perhaps you will say: The Lord, of His goodness has given me some ability; why then am I given no opportunity of making it fruitful? Well, it may be that for the present, He requires the sacrifice of your ability, as He made the sacrifice of His ability. Think you He had no other ability during those years than that of using hammer and saw? But I should wish to do some good, and in this subjection I do none. If you can do no apparent good to others do good to yourself by humility, and to others by your prayers. But if I were in other circumstances, I could do so many grand works! No

doubt, but the Lord has no need of your grand works. What He chiefly requires of you is that you should be humble and obedient like Him, Who "humbled Himself, becoming obedient unto death of the cross." (Phil. 2. 8.)

I have specially insisted upon this matter, for to certain ardent souls it is a point wherein they find obedience and submission to God's will specially difficult. It is more necessary to inculcate obedience in these days than ever before, for it is precisely now that every principle of authority is thrown off. The very foundations of all religious, domestic, and civil authority are being undermined, and in their place absolute independence and unbridled license are everywhere preached and propagated. All strive to command, no one will obey; all must be masters, none will be disciples. The air we breathe is so impreg-

nated with these pestilential vapors, that they even penetrate into the most Christian families, into the vestibule of the sanctuary, and even into the precincts of the cloister.

The third way in which the Will of God is shown to us is by the happenings, either fortunate or unfortunate, of our lives. We do not need much heroism to adapt ourselves to good fortune. Agreeable circumstances please all, and as they come to us we can easily say: Thanks be to God. But it is hard to say so in the midst of bitterness and contradictions. But there is a secret by which we may sweeten the bitterness, and deaden the sting of these vexations. Consider first, the principle from which they proceed and secondly, the end to which they are directed. Whence indeed do you imagine that poverty, or sickness, or persecution, or afflictions, or anything disagreeable

come to you? Do not tell me from fortune or chance, for these are words without meaning invented by ignorance.

You have already seen that God is the sovereign Master of the world. Can you believe that anything will happen to you without His Will? Therefore, in all that happens to you, whatever may be the immediate cause, the first cause is no other than God. "Good things and evil, life and death, poverty and riches are from God." (Eccles. 11. 14.) Chance, fate, fortune are nothing but the disguises under which God's good Providence passes, blessing us as He goes. The thought that afflictions come to us direct from God is a great comfort. In truth, if I stop to look only at the villain who ill-uses me, I break out into fury against him. But if instead, lifting my eyes on high, I behold the

Lord making use of the man as an instrument to fulfill His Divine Will in my regard, I shall not have courage to complain. Was it Thou, O Lord, Who didst hurt me? Had it been another, how could I have borne it! But as it was Thou, I bow my head willingly: "I was dumb and I opened not my mouth, because Thou hast done it." (Ps. 38. 10.)

Thus did Job take comfort in all his tribulations: "The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away: as it hath pleased the Lord, so it is done: blessed be the name of the Lord." (Job. 1. 21.) St. Augustine thus exhorts us to keep peace in the midst of our tribulations: "Whatever of evil happens to you, stop not to blame the agent who mismanaged your business, or the lawyer who lost your case, or the doctor who mistook the disease, but raise your eyes to the first cause which is God.

None of these misfortunes could have overtaken you, had not God so ordered." All things even the bitterest are ordered by God.

But what could be God's reason in so ordering things? None other than your greater good. Some day you may see for yourself that the trial was a benefit. But even should you never see it in this life, you ought still to be convinced of it. All good government has the good of its subjects at heart. Can you believe that the government of God, the prototype of all good government, should not have besides the glory of God, the good of its subjects at heart? The government of God, even in those of its dispositions which seem most painful to us, seeks nothing else but our spiritual and temporal good. "We know that to them that love God, all things work together into good." (Rom. 8. 28.) Even if

God were not primarily so desirous Himself of our good, would not our confiding abandonment of ourselves into His Hands powerfully incline Him thereto? Imagine a son saying to his father: I so thoroughly trust you, that I am prepared with my eyes shut, to accept your choice for me of a state of life, a career or a wife, well knowing that your choice will be the best for me. Such confidence surely would take the father's heart by storm. Would it not be a point of honor with such a father or mother to do a great deal more than the son could justly expect? Would God, Who is the best of Fathers, do less, think you? He knows what is our good. He wills it and He has the power to give it to us. Can we doubt that He will procure it? Once for all, learn to throw yourself with filial confidence into His arms. See how quiet the child is in the arms of his mother.

She can carry him wherever she chooses; provided he is with her he cares for nothing else. If the mother approaches the fire, the child being with her is not afraid of being burnt. If she runs up and down stairs with him in her arms, he is not afraid of falling. If in playing she swings him backwards and forwards and high in the air, he only crows and laughs without fear in her sustaining arms. So must we act with our tender and loving Father. As a child in its mother's bosom, we must be without fear in the Heart of Jesus. Though earth and hell be armed against us, we may laugh at their rage and sleep in peace, while nestling with confidence in the arms of Our Father.

CHAPTER V

JESUS PRAYING TO THE FATHER

The union of Jesus Christ with His divine Father was shown not only by the conformity of His own Will with that of His Father, but amongst other ways also by prayer. If you take prayer in its general signification, that is, an elevation of the mind and heart to God, it may be truly said that the life of Christ was a continual prayer, for His Mind and Heart were always absorbed in God. But if you take the word in its more restricted sense, that

is a time of special recollection for the producing of devout affections, or for the pouring forth of petitions, then Our Lord gave us many examples also of direct prayer from that first: "Behold, I come!" which He spoke in spirit in His cradle, to the final cry He uttered upon the Cross: "Father, into Thy Hands I commend My Spirit." (Luke 23. 46.)

Sometimes to enjoy greater peace He would go alone into the mountain to pray, "And He passed the whole night in the prayer of God." For the space of forty days and forty nights He was in the desert, given up to fasting and prayer. The Evangelists report three special prayers He made. One at the tomb of Lazarus, which preceded his raising by Jesus from the dead. "Father, I give Thee thanks that Thou hast heard Me. And I knew that Thou hearest Me always,

but because of the people who stand about have I said it, that they may believe that Thou hast sent Me." (John 11. 41. 42.) The second, at the Last Supper in which He poured out all the love of His great soul for His Father and His disciples. (John 17.) And the third, in the Garden of Gethsemani, which was a cry of sorrow and of resignation, the echo of which still sounds in our ears after the lapse of so many centuries: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Matt. 27. 39.)

With what profound reverence, with what filial confidence, did He pray. In those hours in which His fervent spirit was absorbed in God, the angels must have prayed around Him in silent ecstasy. All that He practised Himself, He enjoined also upon His followers,

when He told them that a certain kind of devil "can go out by nothing but by prayer and fasting" (Mark 9. 28); also when He impressed upon them the necessity of praying without ceasing; and when He disdained not to teach His disciples the very words they should use in praying to the Father in Heaven. "Thus therefore shall you pray: Our Father Who art in Heaven." (Matt. 6. 9.)

It might seem superfluous to insist so much upon a thing suggested to man by his great need no less than by his strict duty. The man who does not pray has no other way of paying homage to his Creator or of recognizing His supreme dominion over the whole earth. He lives isolated from God in a region of his own creating, where he would fain believe he has no need of God. He has spitefully broken the

chain of loving dependence which nature itself had formed between him and his God.

If it is a duty to pray, it is no less an absolute necessity. Who, indeed, has all that he honestly desires here below? Who can say: I lack nothing, I am happy? To obtain what we need we must pray. The praying soul prostrate before God is a new Abigail, a new Esther. To her prayers, her sighs, her tears, the Heavenly David must yield; by them the divine Assuerus be moved to pity. He assures us Himself that "every one that asketh receiveth." (Luke 11. 10.) Prayer is the sword of the weak: without it he is nothing, with it, he is all-powerful. It is his strength, his life. If you snatch it from his hand you kill him.

How comes it then, that prayer is neglected by so many and so ill-spoken of by others? These complaints are

generally heard from three sorts of persons: the worldly, the careless, and a certain class of religious people. The worldly say: God knows all our necessities: if He cares to provide for them He has no need of our prayers—Of course, He has no need; it is we ourselves who have need of prayer. A king may know the necessities of a subject; he may, nevertheless, before providing for them, await the presenting of a petition. A father knows the needs of his son, but he likes hearing them from his own lips. So does our Lord with us. And thus it is that between Heaven and earth, between the Creator and the creature there is established and maintained that sweet intercourse of prayer on the one side, and of grace and blessing on the other. Do you desire to see this intercourse stopped, and that blessings and graces should fall from Heaven upon man,

without having passed through the channel of prayer? Can the favors of men be had for the mere asking? Certainly not. What is not enough to obtain earthly goods, is enough to obtain Heavenly ones. Does the price seem too great? Do you expect all these blessings to fall into your mouth without opening your lips to ask for them? Poor little worm of the earth, raise not your head against the Most High.

Some say: it is virtue, not prayer, that honors God. Virtue honors God, no doubt; but virtue without prayer is inconceivable. Virtue is a treasure exposed to every sort of snare: what can defend it from so many dangers? When chaste Joseph is tempted by the shameless Egyptian, when the pure Susanna falls into the clutches of the wicked elders, when in the soul of the pure in heart a sudden flame bursts forth, where, but in prayer do they find

a safe refuge from the demon of temptation? "Watch ye, and pray, that you enter not into temptation." (Mark 14. 38.) Such has ever been, such will always be, the only bulwark of virtue. The heroes of virtue are always men of prayer. Have miracles of virtue ever been seen among the ranks of those who do not pray? Some spark, perhaps, you may occasionally discover, some will-o'-the-wisp, but strong solid virtue, constant in the midst of fierce trials, cannot be produced by nature left to herself. Man may, for a time, stand upright and gigantic like the great statue of Nabuchodonosor. Let but a stone from the mountain hit its feet, and the colossus will fall and cover the whole valley with its ruins. There is no morality without the help of God, and, speaking generally, the help of God is only obtained by prayer.

Another objection of the worldly is

that prayer is a waste of time, and the occupation of the idle. But the love and service of God is the great end for which we have been created. He who does not love and serve God, even though he were to stagger the world with his brave deeds, or to change the fate of empires like Alexander, would still do nothing worth, for he does not attain the end of his creation. He has "taken his soul in vain." (Ps. 23. 4.) Waste of time, do you say? Had there been but ten just men in the wicked cities at the time of Abraham, Divine Justice would have stayed the awful punishment meted out to them. And can you tell from what fearful chastisements the wicked cities of modern times are saved by the prayers of the tens of thousands of devout souls? Night and day they watch over the people of God, and their prayers, rising like incense from silent cloisters to Heaven, disarm

the anger of God. "If we could penetrate into the secrets of God and of history, we should be amazed at seeing the marvelous effects of prayer, even in purely human affairs. I verily believe that if there were ever to be one day, or even one hour, in which no prayer was raised from earth to Heaven, that day and hour would be the last of the world." These words were said in Parliament by the fine statesman, Donoso Cortes. He might, moreover, have asked his hearers which of the two employs time more profitably, the socialist deputy noisily airing his atheism in parliament; or the simple nun who at the same hour is praying in choir. Prayer a loss of time indeed! Those who speak thus are generally idlers and worldlings, who have made life a perpetual round of amusements, frivolities, empty nothing; who spend their days in drinking, playing and

smoking, eating their hearts out with weariness and discontent. They may say that prayer is waste of time as often as they please. Our Divine Master thought it no waste of time to spend forty days in continual prayer.

Now see what the careless have to say against prayer. I would willingly pray, they declare, but I have no time. And what is time given to you for if not for eternity? And how is it that you find time for everything except for eternity? For the things of the body you have plenty of time, but none for the things of the soul. As you give your body food at least twice a day, that is morning and evening, you should give your soul its needful food which is prayer, also twice a day. In the morning when all nature awakes from sleep, it sings in chorus, lifting to Heaven the fragrance of its perfumes. Surely man also, should then lift his eyes to

God, and consecrate to Him the first hours of the opening day. In the evening when the silence of nature and the growing darkness of night invite the soul to grave and religious thoughts, is it not meet that before going to rest, man should kneel and thank the Author of all good for the blessings of the day just finished, and fall asleep under the wings of the Divine Mercy? He who does not pray on rising in the morning and on going to rest at night can only be compared to the wild animals which have no thought either on waking or in falling asleep in their rough coverts.

Nor should prayer be always said in private. Our needs being often common our prayers should likewise often be in common. What can be more beautiful than family prayer? Can anything be more beautiful than to see a father and mother kneeling in prayer

before a Crucifix or a holy picture, surrounded by their children? The Angels gather round this little group, and carry up to Heaven the incense of their prayers. How pleasing to God is this sight! Has He not said: "Where there are two or three, gathered together in My Name, there am I, in the midst of them." (Matt. 18. 20.)

Finally, many even among those who are devout, complain of prayer. So long have I prayed, they say, and I have never been heard! In the first place: you who pray, are you a just man or a sinner? If you are actually in a state of sin hasten to put yourself in the state of grace, for that will be not only for your good, but will also help towards the granting of your prayers. Be not like those who rather than give up sin leave off praying. You, on the contrary, give up sin and continue praying; you will be happier in mind so do-

ing. Secondly: how do you pray? With faith, fervor, reverence? Behold Jesus praying at the grave of Lazarus, in the Cenacle, in the garden of Olives, on the Cross. Thirdly: what do you pray for? Spiritual graces for yourself? Be very certain that if you pray for them aright, you will sooner or later obtain them. Or do you pray for spiritual graces for others? It may be that they themselves put obstacles in the way of your prayers being granted. But if you persevere in prayer you may reasonably hope that at last, the Lord will hear you and console you, as He heard and consoled St. Monica. He desires even more vehemently than you do the salvation of those souls: therefore courage and confidence! Perhaps you pray for temporal graces? You certainly cannot be sure that God will grant you these; because it is uncertain whether they

would be for your real good. If the Lord knows that what you ask will not be profitable for you, He will not give you that particular grace. Nevertheless your prayers will not be lost. He will give you a grace, greater than the one you desire; He will give it to you perhaps even without your knowledge. Sometimes, too, His delay in hearing you comes from His delight in seeing you constantly at His Feet imploring His favors. He is like a mother, who does not give her child at once the sweets or playthings he asks her for: she enjoys watching his efforts to get from her what he wants.

Then again, many complain of the dryness they feel in prayer. What should they do? Suffer impatience, humble yourself, confess your misery to the Lord, saying with the Psalmist: "I stretched forth my hand to Thee: my soul is as earth without water unto

Thee." (Ps. 142. 6.) The flowers lying with bent head parched with summer heat, revive and bloom afresh when the soft dew falls upon their drooping petals. Beg in all faith and humility for one drop of the Heavenly dew distilled from the pierced side of Jesus, to revive and refresh your thirsty soul and make the arid desert bloom in His sight.

CHAPTER VI

JESUS DETACHED FROM THE WORLD

In the life of St. Ignatius Loyola we read that he often walked in the streets with his eyes raised to Heaven, so that the passers-by called him "the father who is always looking up to Heaven." His face showed the perfect detachment from earth in which he lived.

This is just what I see, though in a much higher measure, in the adorable countenance of Our Divine Saviour so often raised to Heaven.

Besides His ever-present pure inten-

tion of doing all for God's glory, besides His perfect conformity to the Divine Will, besides the elevation of His mind in prayer, I see in this looking up to Heaven so often mentioned in the Gospel, His absolute detachment from earth. His Feet indeed touched the earth, but His Divine Soul was in His Heavenly country. It was like a bright and ardent flame ever pointing upwards to Heaven.

From the moment of His Birth in a poor stable He clearly showed how little He cared for the world. His coming was hidden; His life too was hidden for thirty years in a humble shop. During His three years' ministry, when, perforce, He appeared in public, He studiously kept Himself detached from riches, honors, pleasures and all the goods of life. From the banks of Jordan when John hailed Him as the Lamb of God Who was to take away the sins

of the world, and the voice of His Eternal Father declared Him to be His beloved Son, the object of His Divine complacency, He retires into the desert, to fly from the admiring crowds which would have followed Him. When He worked His greatest miracles how often He enjoined silence upon those whom He cured. When the grateful people would have made Him king He escaped from them retiring into a lonely mountain.

But when He is to die overwhelmed in an ocean of sufferings and ignominies, oh, then! to show how little He prized the world, He chose the most crowded city, the most solemn day, the very mid-day hour to show Himself to all as the scorn and the byword of the people. In many of His sermons He has words of condemnation for the world; more than once He exclaims: "Woe to the world." (Matt. 18. 7.)

He protests that He is "not of the world" and that He had "overcome the world" (John 16. 33), that He prayed "not for the world." (John 17. 9.) He forbade ambition and envy among His own. He reproved the disciples who asked for the first places in His Kingdom; "You know not what you ask!" (Mark 10. 38.) His words to the rich are terrible: "How hardly shall they that have riches, enter into the Kingdom of God." (Mark 10. 23.) "Woe to you that are rich: for you have your consolation." (Luke 6. 24.) He also pronounces woes upon the pleasure-seekers of the world: "Woe to you that are filled: for you shall hunger. Woe to you that now laugh: for you shall mourn and weep." (Luke 6. 25.)

Hence it is manifest how diametrically opposite to the spirit of the world is the spirit of Jesus Christ. He will never recognize us as His followers un-

less we are perfectly detached from the maxims and goods of this world.

But what is meant by the World? There are two worlds: one within, the other without the Church. The first is the congregation of men without faith: the second is the congregation of Christians who do not live in conformity with the faith they profess. The spirit of one and the other is identical. "All that is in the world is the concupiscence of the flesh, and the concupiscence of the eyes, and the pride of life, which is not of the Father but is of the world." (John 2. 16.)

In the world is the inordinate love of honors, riches and pleasures: sensuality, pride, avarice: this is the world condemned by Christ; this is the world against which St. John warns us "Love not the world, nor the things which are in the world. If any man love the

world, the charity of the Father is not in him." (John 2. 15.)

But as we are in the world we are materially obliged to make use of the things of the world. Yes, but only in passing, not in giving ourselves up to them heart and soul. "This therefore I say, brethren: the time is short: it remaineth that they also who have wives, be as if they had none . . . and they that use this world, as if they used it not, for the fashion of this world passeth away." (1. Cor. 7. 29. 31.) The goods of this world are perishable, empty. They are meant to urge us on to seek after Heavenly goods. Even if we gave ourselves up to the pursuit of riches, honors, pleasures to our heart's content, for how long should we be able to enjoy them? Only to the end of our lives, and no more. St. James asks: "What is your life? It is a vapor

which appeareth for a little while, and afterwards shall vanish away." Moments and hours fly, days pass away and we with them, when suddenly in the best part of the way we dash our feet against a stone: it is the stone of the tomb. What folly to lose our hearts to goods that we must leave so soon! Besides, how do we know that we shall enjoy them even during our whole lives? May we not lose them? Are all pleasures always at our disposal? How can we enjoy them when sickness nails us to our beds? Our riches may be abundant, but shall we always possess them? How many wealthy families have we seen come to ruin in the last few years! Our dignities and honors too may be most exalted: but in the midst of so many social upheavals, can any of them be regarded as secure? Sometimes an involuntary fault, a slight disaster, is enough to

turn into hatred, or at least contempt, all the favor we have hitherto enjoyed.

Poor Thomas Pond had rueful experience of this at the court of Queen Elizabeth. He had danced admirably amidst the applause of the queen and her courtiers, when suddenly his foot twisted and he fell heavily to the ground. The whole court broke out into jeers and laughter, and the queen herself derisively cried: "Up with you, ox!" Such is the world and its fidelity. To-day it crowns you with flowers, to-morrow it scornfully snatches them from your brow. To-day it decrees you a triumph on the Capitol, to-morrow it leaves you to beg an obolo like Belisarius at the very city gates he had defended. Beware of its blandishments.

Even supposing you will long keep hold of all these goods, what will you always find in them? A void, bitter,

deep and distressing. From one gratified desire will spring a thousand more to torment you. Alexander the great having conquered the greater part of the known world, burst into tears and lamentations when he heard there was yet another world to conquer. Unhappy man, even if he could have conquered this other world, his soul would still have been tormented with other unattainable desires.

The young man who has just thrown off the parental yoke to live as he pleases, spending days and nights in a continual round of pleasures, is outwardly happy, no doubt. But there comes a moment when in solitary musings he pauses to look into his heart and what does he find, think you? A sense of disgust and emptiness; his soul is full of bitterness. And the young girl who has shaken herself free from her mother's control, and who seems ab-

sorbed in balls and parties and flirtations, the envied of her less fortunate companions. Ask her if she is happy. In the quiet of her own room at night, alone with her disquieting thoughts, if her mother surprises her in tears or hears her sighs, will she be astonished? The explanation is easy.

All earthly goods, no matter how precious, are absolutely out of proportion with the nature of our souls. They may for a time dazzle us, but they can never satisfy us. "Our soul is capable of containing God," says St. Augustine, "less than God may occupy it, but will never fill it." He had tried, and therefore spoke from his own experience. O poor foolish human hearts pursuing such will-o'-the-wisps! These goods are material: you by nature are spiritual. They are limited: your desires and yearnings are infinite. They are fleeting; you are to live for

ever. You deceive yourself wishing to feed upon air, to nourish yourself with smoke, to appease your hunger with husks of swine.

Nor is this true only of these material and coarser advantages. Even the most refined of these goods, those which feed our noblest mental faculties, even these, cannot fully satisfy us. The philosopher seeks truth in hours of midnight study and speculation, but after long pondering he still feels himself groping in the dark, and has to exclaim in despair: "I sought . . . and I found . . . not." (Cant. 3. 2.) So also does the artist seek the beautiful, flying everywhere on the wings of fancy. He never succeeds in seizing the ideal he sighs after, and he also has to cry sadly: "I sought and I found . . . not!" The statesman and the warrior alike seek the height of power and glory. But after having reached

to the summit of human ambition, each feels the void of the heart and must confess: "I sought . . . and I found . . . not!" Poor eagles! which vainly spread your wings to the highest flights, know you not that what you seek is far beyond the utmost soaring of your immortal spirits? Few indeed are those who possess all the glories and delights of Solomon, but how many are those who, in rich and costly dwellings and having all that life can give, echo his cry of anguish: "I was weary of my life, when I saw that all things under the sun are evil, and all vanity and vexation of spirit." (Eccles. 2. 17.)

How many also the women who can repeat the words that Madame de Maintenon, wife of Louis XIV, wrote at the height of her power, to her friend Madame de Maisonfort: "Do you not see that I am actually dying of

sadness in this condition, fortunate beyond all imagination, to which I have attained? I have been young and beautiful: I have tasted many pleasures; even late in life I was everywhere beloved. At last I have risen to my present high estate: I assure you that each state leaves a frightful void in the heart. I have within me something, I know not what, which has never been completely satisfied." Such is the human heart: a singular abyss; you may throw into it all the happiness of earth, the abyss swallows it all, but far from being filled it becomes ever larger and more voracious.

You can easily understand how it is that so many chosen souls fly from a world in which is found nothing but vexation, and go to seek peace of heart and contentment of soul in the shadow of the cloister. Noble, generous souls! if the children of the world have not the

courage to imitate you, let them at least have the good sense to respect you!

One word more! This aching void of the heart which all feel, is above all grievous to those who are raised above their fellows by the refinement of their feelings. Doubly sad if, in the midst of the darkness around, the light of faith shines not upon them; if they are not given to see, even in the distance, a streak of blue sky. It is then that souls who were made for high flights and to be as examples for others instead of lifting themselves to Heaven fall into idle despondency. Then, too, that you see poor darkened souls, in whose eyes life is nothing but a desert without flowers, a night without stars, a dark and pathless forest. Then that you meet the sad shades of poets, like Byron, Foscolo, Leopardi, wandering disconsolate over the world, seeking peace in vain, cursing their fate and

confiding their sorrows to lyres which were worthy of better sounds. O erring geniuses, why do you so misunderstand the intentions of nature? If the goods of earth when sought escape from us, if their possession wearies us, why conclude that all is only an irony of fate? Why not instead see in this a proof of our high destiny? Why not rather say: There is nothing on this earth that is worthy of me: therefore I am not made for this earth. Nothing that is finite can content me: therefore I am created for the infinite. No, the human heart cannot thus hang in mid-air: either above or below, either in Heaven or earth it must cling to something, like the drowning man catching at a plank.

In this profound void, in this hunger of the soul, the human heart, in spite of itself, feels the need of the infinite, the need of God.

And you would snatch that God from it? And you would pluck from the heart all hopes of a future life which is our only comfort? And what compensation do you offer us? Doubt, emptiness, scepticism! the scepticism which is the death of the soul. But we wish to live not to die! According to you, life is nothing but a disconsolate yearning after unattainable happiness—Must this yearning end in the tomb? O poets of despair, if these icebound theories please you, keep them to yourselves; we will have none of them. Trouble not the innermost sanctuary of conscience, nor sow trouble in pure hearts which, while feeling the emptiness of life here below, feel also the need of comforting themselves by the thought of the fulness of the eternal years.

Sursum Corda! lift yourselves to Heaven, O pure hearts! Here below is not your home. "For we have not here

a lasting city: but we seek one that is to come." (Heb. 13. 14.) We are pilgrims, exiles here; our country is above. Why should we flutter like "silly moths around the false lights of perishable goods?"—"Why wander around, foolish man," says St. Augustine, "always seeking after good? Seek that good which alone is worthy of thee, the true good, the supreme good in which is centered all good: seek the one good which contains all goods. Pilgrim of Heaven, tarry not on earth. The goal is above, let thine eyes then be always fixed above: let thy heart be fixed there where true joys reside."

O God of my heart! Thou alone canst fill it wholly. Thou didst make me great, creating me to Thy own image, making me like Thy Heavenly spirits. Without Thee all else is but sorrow and pain to my soul. When I came forth from Thy mighty hand,

Thou didst will that with eagle wings my soul should soar aloft to Thee. Oh, suffer me not to creep upon the sordid earth, unmindful of my lofty destiny. Thou hast given to me a spirit so like Thine own; affections which in Thee alone find rest, I give them back to Thee. Take them Lord! and grant that in Thy Heavenly home, nay in Thy bosom itself, my soul tired with its long flight, may fold its wings at last in peace and joy for evermore!

CHAPTER VII

JESUS MOST HUMBLE

In considering the detachment of Christ from the things of the world, we have already begun to enter deeply into the hidden mysteries of His most sacred Heart. How many other marvels has this Heart to reveal to us, how many more lessons to teach us! And the first of these lessons, He has Himself taught us in His own words: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (Matt. 11. 20.)

Although Jesus Christ as Man, was

full of all perfection possible to a creature, nevertheless He annihilated Himself in His Father's sight, by reason of the infinite distance between them. Hence His oft-repeated protest that He had nothing of His own; that He had received all from the liberality of the Father; that His glory was nothing; that His testimony had no value unless supported by His Father's testimony; that His doctrine at which all marveled, was not His but the Father's Who sent Him. (John 7. 16.) He even refused to be called good, because only the Father is essentially, absolutely good. "Why askest thou me concerning good? One is good, God." (Matt. 19. 17.)

Before men what humility, what modesty did He always show, always hiding rather than manifesting Who He was! While all expected the Messias to appear as a glorious King, He

came instead in humility and annihilation: "He emptied Himself, taking the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and in habit found as a man." (Phil. 2. 7.) He chose His Virgin Mother from among the poor and the despised of the world. His first disciples were poor too and of little account. The majority of His hearers were of the poorest class, as the prophet Isaias had seen in vision: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, wherefore He hath anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor, He hath sent Me to heal the contrite of heart." (Luke 4. 18.)

Consider His humility in the Passion. He is taken like a thief, buffeted and spit upon, scourged like a slave, crucified between two malefactors as even worse than they. The words of the prophet concerning Him were verified to the letter: "He shall give His cheek to him that striketh Him, and He shall

be filled with reproaches." (Lam. 3. 30.) "Despised and the most abject of men." (Is. 53. 3.) St. Bernard, preaching on the Passion of Christ, exclaims with emotion: "Oh, the last and the highest! Oh, the humblest and the most sublime! Oh, most abject of men! Oh, glory of the angels! None more sublime than He, none more humble."

It is incredible that a writer not confessedly an atheist and having before his eyes such a spectacle of the humility of the Man-God should dare to say that humility is the virtue of feeble minds and cowardly hearts. To such a statement could Gioberti be led by pride!

Well, after all what is humility? St. Bernard says it is the virtue that makes a man vile in his own eyes by reason of his true self-knowledge. Two things therefore must concur to form humility; the one in the mind, the other in the

heart. In the mind, there must be a true knowledge of what one is, either in the order of nature, or in the order of grace: in the heart there must be the sincere desire to treat ourselves, and let others treat us, according to what we really are. Such is true Christian humility. What can be more just, right and reasonable? "You are not required to seek out abstruse mysticisms," says James Balmes in his "Letters to a Sceptic," "to form devout illusions, piously to deceive your soul, and to judge yourself less than you really are. No, no! on the contrary I say: O man, whoever you may be, study yourself with diligence, judge yourself justly, and according to that just judgment think and speak, act and live; for humility is nothing else but justice and truth."

What does Christian humility require? This only: that man should re-

gard himself with impartial and truthful eyes, not concealing from himself either the good or the bad which is in him: either his gifts or his defects, either that which consoles, or that which humbles him. Then indeed he will soon find, and without much seeking, more matter for confusion than for self complacency.

The wise and impartial man will see, in the first place, that all the gifts which adorn him come not from himself but from God Who at any moment can take them from him. He will see in his mind, besides rays of light, shadows and clouds which veil a thousand truths he yearns to know. In his heart along with certain good tendencies, he will find inordinate appetites, corrupt and humbling inclinations for which he has constantly to blush. In his members he finds a law contrary to the law of his mind, an incessant con-

flict between reason and sensuality, which practically reminds him of the sin he has inherited from his first parents. To do evil he always finds himself ready and willing; to do good, what trouble, what difficulties, what repugnance he has to overcome. Besides which he can never do anything worthy of salvation without help from on high. The little good he does with the help of divine grace, is, as he clearly sees, a mere nothing compared with the great duties he owes to God. Even that little good he finds mixed with a thousand defects and imperfections which detract from its value already so slight. In short, the more he examines himself the more miserable he sees himself to be, the more he loses sight of the few gifts he has. One abyss reveals to him another: to-day he knows himself better than he did yesterday, to-morrow he will know himself still better than to-day, and so he

will go on, always discovering in himself new errors, new malice, new misery, because: "The heart is perverse above all things and unsearchable, who can know it?" (Jer. 17. 9.)

Such am I, such are you, such are we all. How can we be proud and inflated in our own conceits, knowing as we do our hidden misery? Wise indeed is he who recognizes his own misery, and sees that he is but a reed shaken by the wind of passion, and who therefore seeks a support by leaning his whole weight upon God.

You see from all that has been said, that humility, far from being a vile and abject thing, is on the contrary truth and rectitude. Man of himself is but a reed; supported by God he is a pillar of strength. A reed yes, but in God's hands he becomes a sword. St. Francis de Sales very truly said: "Humility without generosity is nothing but

cowardice: generosity without humility nothing but presumption." Humility did not prevent St. Paul from undertaking the conversion of the gentiles, and bringing them to the foot of the Cross: nor St. Francis Xavier from carrying the light of faith and civilisation to a new world: nor Saint Pulcheria and St. Louis of France from being models of Christian rulers: nor St. Teresa and St. Catherine of Sienna from obtaining the most powerful influence over the minds alike of princes, prelates and people: nor St. Vincent de Paul, and his modern imitators Don Bosco and Cottolengo, from undertaking gigantic works of charity which might well have dismayed the stoutest hearts. Did I say that humility did not prevent them from doing these wonders? Far indeed from preventing, it was their most efficacious help; because the less they presumed upon

themselves, the more they trusted in God; and God Who turns away from the proud, takes the humble by the hand, supports and strengthens them, and crowns their undertakings with wonderful success.

But as light shines brighter when contrasted with the neighboring darkness, so in order that you may the more clearly see the reasonableness of humility, it will be well to compare it with the opposite vice of pride and arrogance. This vice is so degrading, that he who has it, will not believe that he is proud; woe to any one who says to him: "You have too high an opinion of yourself; you are too anxious to make a fine appearance; you have a great fund of pride!" Only say so, and you will see how ashamed he is, how stoutly he denies the accusation, how loudly he protests that he is misunderstood, his actions misinterpreted. It may be so!

but in this matter one might reply; you are more likely to deceive yourself than others are, for those who have faults are often the last to perceive them. Certain it is that this vice is a most common one. We all have a great fund of self-love, and I assure you that it needs some courage to probe the lowest depths of our hearts, so nauseating and disgusting are the things we find hidden therein.

Shall we take a look? Come then with me. In regard to our thoughts. How prone are we to entertain thoughts of self-complacency about the good qualities of body or soul we possess, or think we possess. How we ruminate upon them, how we exaggerate them by our imagination, how puffed up we are with our own importance. We are like children in this respect, who, putting the bowl of a pipe into soapy water, blow into it till a beautiful bubble

is formed, which they send floating into the air; after a moment it bursts leaving for all trace of its beauty only a drop of dirty water. Also how like a peacock, which spreads its tail of many-colored feathers, and struts with conscious pride along the garden paths. If he could only see his ugly feet, his beautiful fan might perhaps be less often spread. Then as regards our words. How readily do we speak of ourselves, and of those things that redound to our credit, or that may give others the chance of seeing our merits, and speaking of them afterwards. And all, not done openly of course to run the risk of being thought vain, but in such a fine covered way that though on the one hand, the good in us should be known, on the other we should still not lose the credit of being humble and spiritual persons. Sometimes we speak ill of ourselves, and

why? So that our hearers may take up our defense and praise us. Oh, clever masquerader! God knows you even under your mask!

Then as regards our works. How inclined are we in conversation to assume an air of superiority, to behave as if we were preachers or teachers or lawgivers: we are above all others like oil which is always on top of every other liquid. Meantime others laugh in their sleeve at our pretensions, while we imagine they are listening open-mouthed to our oracles. Could we but persuade ourselves that not one of us can possibly know everything, and that a little ignorance is always to be found in every one!

Then as regards our offices and employments. Why are we so afflicted and querulous when things do not succeed? Why such bitter complaints? We try to color these feelings to our-

selves with the pretext of zeal for the glory of God and for the good of souls. But how is it that had the same failure happened to any one else, we should not have been so troubled? Is it not probable that instead of zeal for the glory of God there was, well hidden indeed, a great zeal for our own honor, a secret pride which feared the blame and want of esteem which might fall upon us on account of the failure? Then as regards our neighbor. Whence that irritable feeling when others are praised; those few words by which we at once try to diminish the praise; that satisfaction when the defects of others are noticed; that discovering their faults and shortcomings in order that our own virtues may be more apparent; that coldness, if not worse, towards those who do not seem to esteem us as highly as we think we should be esteemed; those jealousies, envies, spitefulnesses and

so many other miserable meannesses? Are they not all effects of pride and self-love? And these wretched weaknesses are not found only, as one might suppose, in women and children, but are discovered under the wigs of judges and statesmen, and fill the heads of grave matrons. What are all these things but misery, spitefulness, childishness and folly which lower us in our own eyes, and would cover our faces with shame and confusion did others come to know them?

It is not humility then that degrades us, but our innate pride which lowers and dishonors us, making us abject and despicable. And the worst of all the evils it brings us, is the supreme evil of making us hateful in God's sight. On this account He withdraws His help from us, so that we are not even able to guard any of the other virtues. We run the risk of falling into all other

vices: "for pride is the beginning of all sin." (Eccles. 10. 15.)

Besides, pride alienates from us the hearts of our fellow-creatures and blinds them to all the good that we may possess. None seek the company of the proud; all fly from him. Those who flatter him, because they know he loves the incense of praise, are the first to turn him into ridicule as soon as his back is turned. Even if in other respects he is esteemed, he can neither win nor retain true affection.

CHAPTER VIII

JESUS MOST MEEK

The Prophet Isaias rapt in spirit to behold the wonders maturing in the Bosom of God, fixed his gaze upon the splendors of the Divine Word Who, clothed in human flesh, was to bring salvation to the world. When he seeks to describe this Divine Person, and to give us the signs by which we may recognize Him, what, think you, were the signs he chose? Was it the light of His Doctrine or the splendor of His miracles or the magnificence of His

power? None of these things, but only the exquisite charm of His meekness: "My elect," he says, "my soul delighteth in Him. I have given my spirit upon Him . . . He shall not cry, nor have respect to person, neither shall His voice be heard abroad. The bruised reed He shall not break, and smoking flax He shall not quench. He shall bring forth judgment unto truth. He shall not be sad, nor troublesome, till He set judgment in the earth." (Is. 42. 1. 4.)

Beautiful as is this portrait of the Redeemer drawn for us by Isaias, infinitely more perfect and beautiful was the divine original. Behold Jesus in the midst of His Apostles. They were mostly fishermen, or people of a lowly condition. Their manners must have been rude, their speech unpolished, their actions rough. And He, exquisite purity and refinement, lived with them

for three years. He condescended to their weaknesses. With what patience He taught them His sweet lessons, their dull and slow wits never exasperating Him!

See Him among the multitudes that follow Him. They ply Him with importunate questions, they crowd around Him oppressively. No sign of impatience or annoyance escapes Him. See Him with sinners. Does He reject them or treat them with bitterness or humble them in any way? Nay, rather it was His ineffable sweetness that drew these unfortunates to Him. He went amongst them, He eat with them, so that the Pharisees murmured against Him. When two of His disciples wished to call down fire from Heaven upon those who had insulted Him, it was His meek spirit that rebuked them: "You know not of what spirit you are. The Son of Man came not to destroy

souls, but to save." (Luke 9. 55. 56.)

In His Passion He showed how truly the Prophet had described Him, as "the lamb dumb before his shearers, as the sheep led to the slaughter, not opening his mouth." He reproved Peter for striking in His defense, and bade him put up the sword into its scabbard. On the Cross no cry for vengeance escaped Him. To the insults and blasphemies heaped upon Him His only reply was a prayer for pardon. "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do." (Luke 23. 34.)

As He was, so He wishes His followers to be: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (Matt. 11. 29.) He blessed the meek: "Blessed are the meek, for they shall possess the land." (Matt. 5. 4.) And He adds: "Whoever is angry with his brother is in danger of the judgment. . . . If therefore thou offer thy

gift at the altar, and there thou remember that thy brother hath anything against thee, leave there thy offering before the altar, and go first to be reconciled to thy brother, and then coming thou shalt offer thy gift . . . I say to you not to resist evil, but if one strike thee on thy right cheek, turn to him also the other. And if a man contend with thee in judgment, and take away thy coat, let go thy cloak also unto him." (Matt. 5. 22.) These examples and admonitions of Our Divine Redeemer are full of infinite sweetness. They alone should make us love Him and His religion with all our hearts. We must make it our chief study to conform our lives to His teaching; and to do so, we must begin by obtaining a true idea of Christian meekness.

The object round which meekness revolves, perhaps rather, the whetstone upon which it is sharpened and refined,

is anger. Meekness must sometimes repress anger entirely, at other times only moderate it. Is anger always wrong? No, sometimes it is the weapon which the Author of nature has given to man that he may defend himself from evil, therefore it is sometimes called the soldier of reason. The Psalmist tells us: "Be ye angry and sin not." (Ps. 4. 5.) Anger is only wrong when it is inordinate; that is, when it is unreasonable or immoderate, overstepping the just bounds within which it ought to be confined.

St. Ignatius used to say: "I do not wish to see in a superior all the movements of the soul, especially those of anger, totally annihilated, but rather kept perfectly controlled." (Life of St. Ignatius: Ribadeneira.)

Anger, as I have just said, is a movement which arises in the soul to repel some evil. This evil may be of three

kinds. If the evil offends me only because it is an outrage against right reason, the repelling movement of soul with which I rise up against the outrage done to reason is called indignation and is just. If the evil offends me because it offends God, then the movement of my soul is called zeal and is holy. But if the evil offends and embitters me, because it offends me personally, then the movement of my soul is called resentment or desire of revenge, and this movement can scarcely ever be free from fault.

The meek are not therefore apathetic, incapable of anger, but they are wise and know how to govern these three movements of anger, and they do govern them in the various ways suitable to the three kinds of anger we have been considering. They do not allow indignation to degenerate into harshness; they moderate zeal so that it never be-

comes bitter, and they strive to overcome resentment altogether, for it is most often ill regulated on account of self-love, which is but a poor judge in one's own cause. Such are the meek. They are far from being apathetic; at the same time what a contrast are they to the irascible!

Just consider that man in a rage. What a truculent air with eyes bloodshot and starting out of his head, hair on end, lips foaming and livid, all his members shaken with spasmodic movements, his whole person deformed and agitated. What a frightful spectacle he is. To make a man, or worse even a woman in a rage, ashamed of himself or herself it would be quite enough to put them in front of a looking glass. And this disordered exterior is the effect of an interior disorder still more serious. In a man blinded by anger reason no longer reigns. Like a ship without a

rudder, he is tossed to and fro at the mercy of wind and waves, and is shipwrecked at last upon the rocks. And why all this? Often a mere trifle, a thoughtless word, an innocent act taken up wrong, are quite enough to make an irascible man furious, and hurry him into all sorts of excesses. A broken glass, a dish badly cooked, an order neglected is for irascible masters or mistresses an excuse for every kind of violence. The grave and learned Seneca, enraged at the delay of a slave in bringing him his sword, gave the poor wretch such a violent blow on the face that his own hand was covered with blood. Which of the two men is the nobler? the irascible or the meek? And the consequence is that while the irascible man is shunned by all, the meek on the contrary is the idol of all. He has the key to all hearts and opens and sways them at his pleasure.

This was specially seen in the person of St. Francis de Sales, the gentle Bishop of Geneva. Priests and religious, lawyers and soldiers, great and little all flocked to him for help, all deferred willingly to his wise counsels. And why? He had certainly many splendid qualities but chief amongst them all was an extraordinary meekness. It was this which made his whole person so irresistibly attractive, fascinating all and drawing all hearts to him.

How I wish that all women would take note of this matter. They would find in it the secret of becoming what many of them are already: angels of peace in their homes. If the husband is exasperated, or the brother short-tempered, the prudent wife or sister should at all costs avoid answering with anger or arrogance. She knows this would only be casting oil upon the fire. She knows too that when men

are angrily resisted, they only become more violent, whereas on the contrary their hearts are soon melted when they see they are fighting only against weakness. So she does not take up arms against the man, knowing that arms would only break in her weak hands. She trusts to the sweetness with which nature has so largely dowered her, and with which even giants are overcome. Therefore she meets him not in combative mien, but disarmed, placid, meek. She presents herself before him as Abigail before David, modesty in her eyes, humility in her aspect, sweetness in her words, and thus she gradually calms and wins him. Herein lies her strength and the secret of her victory.

St. Gregory Nazianzen gives a piece of good advice to all; that is to turn away anger by a jest. Two duellists were once turned from their deadly pur-

pose precisely in this way. One said to the other as they took their places opposite each other on the so-called field of honor: "One of us will have to remain here."—"Be it you then," replied the other, "not me, for I like movement. Adieu." And the meeting was broken up in good-fellowship instead of by death.

All this is very true, you say; but how can one be sweet with certain sour and quarrelsome people? Then you are to be meek only with the meek? Not much heroism there! Even the domestic cat reaches to that height of virtue. She only scratches those who tease her, and leaves those in peace who do not touch her. If our brethren had no defects in what way should we be able to exercise meekness towards them? If they have defects are we ourselves totally free from defects? If they sometimes annoy us, have we never

given them cause for just resentment? Oh, indeed! our common frailty should be ever a great lesson to us of mutual forbearance. Moreover, you notice carefully the many times your neighbor has been burdensome and aggravating to you: but have you ever noted the many other times when he has striven to overcome himself in those matters that annoy him? Who knows what efforts he has made! Look at yourself too; with all your good intention of correcting certain faults, you never seem to reach entire amendment. Why expect from others what you cannot obtain from yourself? There are not two weights and two measures, one for others and one for yourself. But my character is so impetuous my blood is like quicksilver! Very likely: but a hasty temper does not come so much from warm blood as from overmuch pride.

Yes, it is pride which will not brook contradiction nor suffer the least slight, and which flames up into anger when these things happen. Be humble, and you will also be meek: these two virtues are inseparable. "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (Matt. 11. 29.) If your character is impetuous you must curb it. Such an excuse for anger is good only for lions and tigers and other poor dumb beasts which have not reason to control their instincts: you who have reason must use it. In this abnegation one recognizes the man, still more the Christian. "Sustine et abstine," was a motto of heathen philosophy.

Again, your character is impetuous? Do you imagine that the Saints were all made of soft pulp without salt or bitter? St. Francis de Sales himself, the model of meekness, had to do battle long and strenuously to acquire meekness.

On one occasion when he meekly and calmly endured a grave insult, a person standing by expressed surprise at such meekness. "Are you surprised?" said the Saint. "Would you have had me lose in a quarter of an hour, the little supply of meekness which I have painfully collected during eighteen years of struggles and violence?" Your character is impetuous? Your meekness then will be all the more noble and meritorious. There are some heavy, stupid, foolishly sugary dispositions upon which nothing ever makes an impression; they are too apathetic ever to be roused to indignation, they would not know how to be angry at anything: they are statues rather than men! You would have more merit for one single victory over your temper than these for months and years of their phlegmatic calm.

Finally, if your character is impetu-

ous, have you not at hand the grace of God ever ready and willing to help you conquer and triumph over it? Jesus who has taught you the lesson of meekness, and has Himself given you the example of it, offers you His help also that you may practise it. Take advantage of His help and strive little by little to change your nature, violent perhaps as a bear, into the sweet and gentle nature of a lamb, that you may become like Jesus, the Lamb of God.

CHAPTER IX

JESUS MOST CHARITABLE

The tender sweetness of Jesus which we have been considering, was nothing else but the effect of His infinite love for men, nothing else but the overflowing of that ocean of charity, His most Sacred Heart. Although that charity did not appear in all its splendor until centuries after the Creation of the world, it had burned already before all ages in the Divine World. Already He had thought of us and had designed in His Divine Mind those mysteries

of love, which, in the fulness of time, He was to accomplish for our sake. To His Prophet He had declared: "Yea, I have loved thee with an everlasting love, therefore have I drawn thee, taking pity on thee." (Jer. 31. 3.)

And when He came on earth clothing Himself in our flesh, and began at Bethlehem the toilsome career which was to end on Calvary, who can tell the love that burned in His Heart? Jesus weeps in the manger wrapped in His swaddling clothes; His heart already tastes the agony of Gethsemani: He lies at rest in the bosom of His Mother or in the arms of St. Joseph, but His Heart is in desire upon the Cross. Consider all that He has done and suffered for us. Willingly would He have done and suffered much more, if more had been required for our salvation. He refused no suffering, no

shame for our sakes. "My heart is ready, O God, my heart is ready!" (Ps. 56. 8.)

And while He made so small account of His own sufferings, how deeply did He feel the sorrows and sufferings of others! He sees the two sisters weeping for the death of their brother and He weeps too. "Jesus therefore when He saw her weeping . . . groaned in the spirit and troubled Himself. . . . And Jesus wept. The Jews therefore said: behold how He loved him!" (John 11. 33. 35. 36.) St. Matthew tells us that "seeing the multitudes, He had compassion on them, because they were distressed and lying like sheep that have no shepherd." (Matt. 9. 36.) When the poor, the sick, the wretched, crowd round Him He opens His Heart to them, inviting them to come to Him: "Come to me all you that labor and are burdened, and I

will refresh you." (Matt. 11. 28.) His compassion for them compels Him to work wonderful miracles to heal and comfort them.

When He approaches Jerusalem, the thought of the wrath of God which is to destroy the guilty city draws tears from His eyes. "And when He drew near, seeing the city, He wept over it." (Luke 19. 41.) On His sorrowful way to Calvary laden with His Cross, He forgets the agony of His thorny Crown, of His gaping wounds, and all His own sufferings and anguish, to pity the sufferings which are to fall upon the weeping women who follow Him: "Daughters of Jerusalem," He says to them, "weep not for me, but weep for yourselves and for your children." (Luke 23. 28.)

And why did He climb the painful hill? It would have sufficed for the salvation of the world, had He stooped

to pluck one flower from the earth for our sakes. Yes! but what would have amply sufficed for our need was not sufficient to satisfy His infinite love of us: "His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us." (Eph. 2. 4.) He said Himself that "greater love than this no man hath, that a man lay down his life for his friends." (John 15. 13.)

But Jesus has gone far beyond even that. He had died not for His friends only but also for His enemies: a death not necessary but voluntary, not calm and peaceful but attended with every circumstance of sorrow and bitter suffering and humiliation; and all out of "His exceeding charity, wherewith He loved us."

And as if that were not enough, He decided to leave us a pledge of His love which should remain with us to the end of time. He willed to institute the Blessed Sacrament of the Eucharist, in

spite of His foreknowledge of the horrible ingratitude with which His love would be repaid by such multitudes of unbelievers and bad Christians. He cared so little for this, that He overcame all obstacles and all difficulties. The muddy waters of contradiction could not quench the flames of His burning love of us: "Many waters cannot quench charity, neither can the floods drown it." (Cant. 8. 7.)

And what does He ask of us in return for all His love? Nought else but love. That we should love Him. Can we do any less? And that we should love one another as He has loved us: "A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another, as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13. 34.) Let us therefore study this charity that He commands that we may form a just idea of what it is.

And first we may ask: Why does Our Lord call this a new commandment? Was there not before He came such a thing among men as mutual charity? Yes, there was: but before the coming of Our Lord charity was rare, especially among the Gentiles. The little that was in men's hearts was far from resembling the charity that Jesus came to teach the world. St. Francis de Sales says that the love men have for one another may have various reasons. The father loves his sons, the sons love their father. This love is also instilled by nature into the breasts of lions and tigers. It is a praiseworthy love but it is not charity properly so called. Married people also love one another with great tenderness. The same love is also found in turtle doves and pigeons, a just and necessary love no doubt: but it is not charity. Many people love others, either on account of

similarity of tastes, or from esteem for certain gifts. This love is common even among unbelievers. It is friendship or sympathy, or anything you please but it is not charity. What then is charity? It is a virtue by which we love our neighbor as ourselves for the love of God. This last word expresses the specific difference there is between all these praiseworthy loves and the love of charity. By charity you love your neighbor, not from inclination or taste, not for his gifts or for the benefits received from him, but for the love of God. That is, in order to please God, to fulfil the precept God has given you to love your neighbor and to love God Himself in your neighbor. These two loves of God and of your neighbor resolve themselves, therefore, into one love, one charity. It is a plant throwing out two branches; a fountain producing two streams which flow at

last into the great ocean of the Divinity. Behold the new commandment brought to the world by our Divine Redeemer.

Such is true charity to your neighbor, as explained in many of his writings by the holy Bishop of Geneva. From this explanation we can easily appreciate the excellency of Christian charity. What more noble than to see in your neighbor the Image of God in which he was created, the Blood of Christ with which he was redeemed, the Kingdom of God to which he is destined? What more sublime than to contemplate in your neighbor, especially if he is in suffering, the very Person of Jesus Christ, and therefore not only to be merciful to him in view of God, but in a certain sense to be merciful to God Himself. This is precisely the essence of charity, as Jesus has told us: "Amen I say to you, as long as you did it to one of my least

brethren, you did it to me." (Matt. 25. 40.) The outward and visible person of your neighbor is but a veil which hides the adorable person of Our Saviour. The true Christian lifts the veil and gazes attentively at what he sees beneath it. What wonderful spectacle does he behold! Under the rags of poverty he sees the God of glory and majesty, under the wounds of the suffering body the God of might and power, nay, even under the malefactor's chains, the God of holiness and purity. With lowly reverence he kisses those rags, those wounds, those chains, because he sees written in them those words of the Lord: "I was hungry and you gave Me to eat; I was thirsty and you gave Me to drink; I was a stranger, and you took Me in: naked and you covered Me: sick and you visited Me: I was in prison, and you came to Me." (Matt. 25. 35. 36.)

Oh! if we sincerely loved our God, how easy should we find it to love our neighbor! See how we value the image of any one who is dear to us. With what tenderness we gaze upon a photograph or a drawing which resembles him! God has stamped His own divine Image in our neighbor—how then can we help loving him?

Oh, but that person is worthless and disagreeable! You mean that the portrait is not very good and made on rough paper? What matter? It is still the image of your God. If you really love God His image can never be an object of hatred or indifference to you.

From all that has been said you see how different true charity is from natural philanthropy which gives alms or does good to the poor from a feeling of human compassion, and often is satisfied with attending balls and enter-

tainments got up for charity. True charity is exercised by making personal sacrifices, not by enjoying entertainments which are a bitter contrast to the sufferings they are meant to alleviate.

Are there any rules by which we may learn how to love our neighbor aright? Yes. Our Divine Lord has given them to us Himself: "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." (Matt. 19. 19.) Now the love we bear ourselves has two qualities: sincerity and tenderness. It is sincere because, springing from the inmost recess of the heart, it is without pretense and is not confined to words alone but is shown in act. Such ought to be our love for our neighbor. It must be without pretense, not a masquerade as is the charity of those who love you to your face, and behind your back tear not your coat but your very flesh with the two-edged sword of their tongues. Neither must it be a love in

words alone, like that of certain worldlings, who with open arms protest their willingness ever to be your humble servants to command, who declare that you must make use of them unsparingly, whenever the occasion arises and whatever the service you require. Wait till the occasion does arise, and you will soon see how carefully these very humble servants hold aloof. Christian charity does just the contrary; it has few words but many deeds.

Again, the love we bear ourselves is tender. Such, also, should be our love for our neighbor. Not of course that it need be a mawkish love, sensual and worldly, nor a cold, dry, official sort of love. No! there must be cordiality, expansiveness, tenderness in it. This tenderness must make us feel for and cordially sympathise in the sufferings of our brethren, whether these sufferings are moral or physical. It must also

make us indulgent to their faults. They who love will naturally tend to excuse the loved one. For this reason a mother always thinks all her children beautiful even the ones that are in reality ugly. If one of them has too long a nose she will say it is an aristocratic nose, the Bourbons always had noses of the same sort. If therefore we really love our neighbor, we should keep our eyes always open to their good qualities rather than to their defects. How hateful the conduct of those who never can see good in others, but are always on the alert to discover and proclaim their defects. Instead of imitating the bee, which lingers among the flowers, sucking all sweetness from their perfumed blooms, they are like flies infesting and delighting in masses of corrupting matter. We have so much need of indulgence ourselves, let us do all we can to be indulgent to others.

The second rule given to us by Christ is: "All things therefore, whatsoever you would that men should do to you, do you also to them." (Matt. 7. 12.) We must treat others as we should wish to be treated ourselves, therefore we must do them the same good we wish done to ourselves. When I am ill, I should like to be tenderly nursed and cared for; when I am tired, that I should be left in peace; when in company, that I should be greeted with smiling faces; when in need, that I should be helped. All these things I must, therefore, do to others. Also I must not do to others what I should not wish them to do to me. I am not pleased at being harshly treated, or slighted, or spoken to insultingly; why then should I do any of these disagreeable things to others? I do not enjoy being turned into ridicule or being made a butt of, why then do these things to my brethren?

The third rule is: "A new commandment I give unto you: that you love one another as I have loved you, that you also love one another." (John 13. 34.) To love our neighbor as Jesus has loved us. What sublime rule is this! Consider how Jesus has loved us. First without any merit on our part. How could we possibly have deserved His love? It was a gratuitous love. It was also disinterested on His part. What advantage could He derive from loving us—He, eternal blessedness in Himself? And lastly He loved us, in some sense, even more than Himself, for He sacrificed for us His pleasures, His repose, even His life. Such, therefore, should be our love for our neighbor. We must love him without considering his merits, otherwise our love would be a natural love, whereas the love of God must be the motive of our love for our neighbor. We must love him without

any thought of self interest, otherwise our love would be egotism, not charity. Also we must love him in a certain sense even more than we love ourselves. Although the precept of charity does not oblige us to this, the perfection of charity does induce us, in certain cases, to sacrifice our own ease and even more for the good of our neighbor. "In this we have known the charity of God, because He hath laid down His life for us: and we ought to lay down our lives for the brethren." (1 John 3. 16.)

Then as to the practice of charity there are countless ways in which we may practise it. Cesare Cantù, an Italian writer, observes with great wisdom: "No one can say with any certainty: 'to-day I shall be happy,' but every one can say: 'to-day I can give pleasure to someone.'" You can confer great benefits by means of a thousand small services, helping others in their work, giving

them a hand in little difficulties, nursing or cheering the sick. With a little thoughtfulness and good will you can often do real acts of kindness and charity without even having much money. During the French revolution, there were many priests in prison at Versailles where they were left almost to die of starvation. They were saved by the faithful of the town, especially the boys and girls. These children would collect their pocket money and sell all their little trinkets or playthings and take the money to the imprisoned fathers. One little girl of twelve years old thinking that her beautiful masses of fair hair would fetch a round sum, went to a barber to make him cut them off. "But will your mother be pleased?" asked the barber. "Oh, yes," replied the child, "never fear! my hair is my own, my very own. My mother will be quite pleased you may be sure."

And the soft masses fell under the barber's scissors, and the child ran off in high glee, showing the goodly sum her hair had produced for the good of the fathers.

Easier still is the exercise of spiritual charity which can be practiced by means of good words, good advice and good suggestions. For this no money is needed, only kindness and goodness of heart. A cordial word said by a friend, or a benefactor, or a confidant, goes to the heart, and may, on certain occasions, do more good than the words of a priest in the tribunal of penance. Finally if we have no opportunity of doing good to one another, at least let us not do one another harm. Let us not embitter life for one another by discord, rancour, harsh and disagreeable manners. Life is full enough already of disagreeables, why should we add to their number by our harshness to one another? Why

should anger and ill will divide hearts which God made to live together, and love each other? Poor pilgrims who have but a brief day's journey to take together, why should we make the road unbearable to one another by strife and ill-humor? Why sow cockle among the good seed of the Heavenly Father's field? Wherever we live, whoever we are, we are all made in the Image and likeness of the same God, sons of the same Blessed Redemption, brothers bound together in the same family. Oh, let us not break this family bond, nor harshly use the feeble, nor sadden the immortal spirits of our brethren which were made for the peace and love of Heaven!

CHAPTER X

JESUS, MODEL OF MORTIFICATION

From the moment that man, in his blind madness, revolted against His Creator, all creatures which till then had been subject to him, in their turn revolted against his dominion. Not only they, but within himself a fierce conflict broke out between the inferior and the superior part of his nature, between the flesh and the spirit, between his senses and reason. How is order thus overthrown to be restored? By mortification.

Though mortification cannot prevent the rebellion of the inferior part, it can at least repress it so that it does not override the will. Interior mortification bridles the passions of the soul, exterior mortification subdues and controls the senses.

As in the Divine Person of Jesus Christ there could never be the least shadow of disorder, either in His most holy Soul or His adorable Flesh, it would seem impossible that there should be any reason for Him to use these two kinds of mortification. Notwithstanding, He, the All Holy, deigns to take the remedy which we sinners need, in order to induce us to accept it and so to overcome our reluctance and distaste for the salutary medicine. He therefore began His career by declaring that He had not come into the world to do His own will, but that of His Father. "I came down from Heaven," He said,

"not to do my own will, but the will of Him that sent Me." (John 6. 38.) And so, though His natural inclinations, as well as those He had for the preservation of His life and for His Father's glory were perfectly well ordered, He sacrificed both one and the other to the glory of His Father and for the salvation of mankind. And how detached was He, too, from the most legitimate affections of flesh and blood. We shall never fully know, till we reach Heaven, how ardently He loved His Virgin Mother, so holy, so pure, so like as she was to Himself. Nevertheless, hardly has he heard the voice of His Eternal Father calling Him to the temple, than He leaves her without a word. The motive of His absence He explained to her: "Did you not know that I must be about my Father's business?" (Luke 2. 49.)

Later on, during His three years'

Ministry, He almost always lived away from her. One day as He was preaching to the people, one of the bystanders "said unto Him: Behold Thy Mother and Thy brethren stand without seeking Thee. But He answering him that told Him, said: Who is my Mother, and who are My brethren? And stretching forth His hand towards His Disciples, He said: Behold My Mother and My brethren. For whosoever shall do the will of My Father, that is in Heaven, he is my brother, and sister, and mother." (Matt. 12. 47. 50.) So He points out that His Mother's highest claim to His love was, not that she had given Him His human Body, but that she always did the will of the Eternal Father. His Father was always the chief object of His affections as of His thoughts.

In the Garden of Gethsemani He allowed the afflictive passions not indeed

to rebel, but to be moved with great force. He allowed fear and sorrow and weariness to overwhelm Him and to plunge His Soul into depths of more than mortal bitterness. "And He began to fear, and to be heavy." (Mark 14. 33.) "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." (Matt. 26. 38.) He allowed the tempest to rise in His Divine Soul, that He might triumph the more gloriously in proportion as the conflict had been more terrible. Also in order to teach us to say with Him after the natural and human: "Let this chalice pass from me!" the glorious and heroic Fiat, "nevertheless not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Matt. 26. 36.)

Then, if we pass on from the consideration of His ever Blessed Soul, to consider His exterior senses, can we discover any one pleasure or solace that He allowed them? The stable of Beth-

lehem, the dwelling place in Egypt, the house of Nazareth, the sands of the desert, the olive trees of Gethsemani and the heights of Calvary, all proclaim that "the whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom." (Imit. 2. 12. 7.) Can you wonder that He speaks of nothing in His Gospel but of abnegation, self-denial, holy hatred of ourselves, of the violence we must do to ourselves to be His true disciples? "Do not think that I came to send peace upon earth: I came not to send peace, but the sword." (Matt. 10. 33. 34.) There is to be no truce, no peace with our passions but constant warfare. Disorderly nature must be conquered. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me." (Matt. 16. 24.) Whatever places in jeopardy your eternal salvation, were it even as dear to you as your eyes, as necessary as your hand or

foot, must be resolutely destroyed: "Pluck it out and cast it from thee . . . cut it off and cast it from thee." (Matt. 5. 29. 30.)

Nature rebels against such teaching, but to the noble and generous soul the very difficulty of the enterprise, far from being a deterrent, ought to be the most effective stimulus. The hardest of all victories is that gained over self. Hence the Gospel which commands it, is precisely the power that forms truly great men. Tell me, which more clearly shows greatness of soul: the giving way to sensual pleasures as do the beasts of the field, or the controlling and regulating those base passions with sovereign mastery, as does the Christian? Which strikes you as the most generous, the worldling who, having been insulted, breaks out in fury against the offender: tigers and dogs can do as much; or the Christian, who, struck on

one cheek, offers the other, and only revenges himself by kindliness and benefits. Lastly by whom is true courage best shown: by him who accepts the challenge to fight a duel rather than be called a coward and who thereby endangers his life as well as his immortal soul; or by him who replies with dignity that he will not betray his principles or his duty for fear of the jeers or contempt of the world? "The patient man is better than the valiant: and he that ruleth his spirit, than he that taketh cities." (Prov. 16. 32.)

Evangelical mortification is hard indeed, but hard though it be, it is by no means beyond our strength, as St. Paul assures us; "God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that which you are able: but will make also with temptation issue, that you may be able to bear it." (1 Cor. 10. 13.) It is hard, but God can soften it with His

grace and even sweeten and make it easy to us. Does He not say so? "My yoke is sweet and my burden light." (Matt. 11. 30.) It is hard, but it is the test of Christian perfection, as Thomas à Kempis tells us: "In proportion as thou dost violence to thyself, the greater progress wilt thou make." (Imit. 1. 25.) It is hard, but to a certain point it is necessary, indispensable, absolutely required in the followers of Christ. They who refuse to mortify themselves up to this necessary point cannot be His disciples. "If any man will come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." (Matt. 16. 24.)

On one memorable occasion Our Divine Redeemer proposed certain high and difficult things to His disciples. As soon as they had heard Him many of them said: "This saying is hard, and who can hear it? . . .

After this many of His disciples went back; and walked no more with Him." (John 6. 61. 67.) Then Jesus turning with loving sorrow to His apostles "said to the twelve: Will you also go away?" (John 6. 68.) As though He would say: many have abandoned Me; will you too go? You who have for so long been taught by Me, you whom I have ever treated with familiar kindness, whom I have loaded with blessings, who are my friends, my favored ones, my best beloved, will you, even you leave Me? Oh, devout soul! filled to overflowing with God's special favors, consecrated to Him in Baptism, perchance also in the Sanctuary or in the cloister, if in some dark hour the discomfort and tedium of mortification should appal your shrinking nature, take courage, rouse yourself! Imagine you hear Jesus asking you sadly the same question: "Will you too, leave Me?"

Surely your answer will be none other than that of the loving, ardent Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6. 69.) Say to Him: O Lord, why should I leave Thee, I whom Thou lovest? What would become of me, far away from Thee? To whom should I go for comfort and strength but to Thee, Who "art the Christ, the Son of God!" (John 6. 70.)

Besides interior mortification it is also necessary to practice exterior mortification or penance. And this, either in expiation of our past sins, or for the controlling of sensuality lest it hurry us into other sins.

In what does this mortification consist? Chiefly in doing the penance binding upon all Christians, by obeying the laws of fasting and abstinence commanded by the Church. The fasting enjoined by these laws is very much milder

than the fasting of Our Lord in the desert which lasted for forty days. But you exclaim: I have no health to undertake these fasts and abstinences; I cannot possibly do them! Is this impossibility on your part quite certain?

I see for instance ladies who speak thus, dancing cheerfully and vigorously for long hours with this or that person; they are never tired or weary even when they only go home in the early hours of the morning. But when a fast day approaches they make a thousand excuses! My poor head, my digestion, my great weakness! Surely your weakness is of a very peculiar kind: you can dance all night to please the world and for your own amusement; there is no question then of your poor head or your digestion or your weakness. Even your legs are strong as steel: but ask you to do a little penance to imitate Jesus and to expiate

your sins and to obey the Church, at once you are ready to succumb to all your ailments and weaknesses.

Well! we will suppose after all, that you are really not strong enough for fast and vigils. In that case I propose that you undertake some small mortifications, which will do no harm either to your head, or your digestion or your general health. With St. Paul I will "speak a human thing because of the infirmity of your flesh. For as you have yielded your members to serve uncleanness unto iniquity, so now yield your members to serve justice, unto sanctification." (Rom. 6. 19.) That is to say, all that has served in committing sin in the past, must now serve in practicing virtue. Thus: your eyes which have hitherto sinned in many ways must henceforth do penance by the Christian modesty of your looks. Also by refraining from certain even al-

lowable curiosities, by abstaining from looking at pleasant and quite innocent sights, do what you can to expiate your former pleasure in unguarded looks. Your ears were always open to enjoy loose talk, biting criticisms, sensual sounds, at balls and theaters. Let them now do penance by shutting themselves up not only from all that is unlawful, but even sometimes from songs and harmonies, in order to listen more attentively to the Word of God and the admonitions of superiors. Your tongue has been the instrument of much disorderly and sinful speech. Punish it by sometimes keeping back some witty pleasantry you would enjoy making, and by using it more than in the past for the praise of God by prayer, and for your neighbor's benefit by good counsel and kind words. The love of good cheer formerly led you into many excesses. Do penance for them by some-

times sacrificing to Our Lord a portion at least of some particularly appetising food or drink. Your hands have often been instruments of sin, they also must do penance. Open them wide to give alms; use them to succour the needy by work for the poor, or for the adornment of God's altar. And so, as all your members have been misused and profaned in the service of Satan, let them from this time forth be cleansed and sanctified in the service of God. What can be more reasonable?

To these you may add unseen and unobserved a few little easy practices of both interior and exterior mortification. You might, for instance, moderate your natural activity and too great solicitude or precipitation in action even in good works. Or by not opening a letter as soon as you receive it, put off the pleasure for a quarter of an hour or even

longer. Not putting yourself into comfortable attitudes which might be slightly lacking in modesty. Not grumbling about food, taking cheerfully what is provided; or about clothing, or the weather, or the little discomforts of the house. Avoiding all sensuality and inordinate love of comfort and ease. Not to be too anxious and careful about your health. Be not like those of whom St. Teresa says, that they take holiday one day because they have headache, the second day because they have had it, and the third day, that it may not come back. These and other such little acts of mortification that the Holy Spirit suggests to devout souls, may be done without hurting the health or breaking any bones, and are highly beneficial to the soul.

One word more and I have done. The Holy Spirit sends the slothful to

the ant to learn diligence. "Go to the ant, oh sluggard, and consider her ways." (Prov. 6. 6.) Shall I do wrong, if I ask you to study with me the lessons of mortification given by another homely animal? If suffering is so hard a thing to you, consider for a moment the sufferings of the poor ass and with what patience he bears them. Heat and cold, hunger and thirst, bad food, little sleep: weighted with intolerable burdens, urged on with cruel blows, he is the slave of all and works in patience day and night. If he could speak would he not say to you: I am treated so ill who have never committed sin; you whose sins are more numerous than the hairs on my shaggy coat, should learn how to suffer patiently the ills of life, taking example from your poor patient Brother Ass.

CHAPTER XI

JESUS, KING OF THE APOSTLES

Come, let us adore the Lord, the King of the Apostles. The greater part of the Life of Our Divine Redeemer was spent in retirement hidden within the walls of a poor house and an obscure shop. But the light was not to be hidden always under a bushel. The Heavenly doctrine He had brought down from the Bosom of the Father was to be preached everywhere for the salvation of the world. Therefore, He left His humble retreat and during the

last three years of His life He gave Himself up to the Apostolic Ministry with marvelous zeal, and at the cost of infinite labor and suffering. How does He travel? Always on foot through all weathers, in the hottest hours of the day, feeling all the weariness of the long journeys. "Jesus therefore, being wearied with His journey, sat thus on the well." (John 4. 6.) And what was His food? That of the poor: He lived on alms, specially those given by the devout women who followed Him "and who ministered to Him, of their substance." (Luke 4. 6.) And where did He sleep? He had no home, no room of His own; He slept and lodged where He could, sometimes received as a guest out of charity, at other times not having a roof to cover Him at night. He could truly say: "The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air nests, but the Son of

man hath not where to lay His Head." (Matt. 8. 20.)

Little did He care for that. The salvation of souls was the dominant thought of His mind, the mainspring of all His actions. He went about only seeking souls. He worked for them, lived for them, neglecting food and rest to devote Himself to them. When the disciples found Him at Jacob's well tired and hungry after His colloquy with the Samaritan woman, they pressed Him to eat of the food they had brought, saying: "Rabbi, eat." But He said to them: "I have meat to eat of which you know not" . . . adding, "My meat is the will of Him that sent Me." (John 4. 31. 34.) It was indeed the will of His Father, that He should work and suffer for the salvation of souls.

There was nothing bitter or violent in His zeal. To only two classes of

men did He ever show severity and anger: to the profaners of the Temple and to the hypocritical Pharisees. With all others He was always gentle and long-suffering. To all appearance sinners held the first place in His Heart even in preference to the just. When the Pharisees murmured that He eat with publicans and sinners, He said: "they that are in health, need not the physician, but they that are ill. Go then and learn what this meaneth, I will have mercy and not sacrifice. For I am not come to call the just, but sinners." (Matt. 9. 11. 13.) He sought them in their houses, He conversed with them, eating at their table in spite of the disapproval of the Pharisees. With what gentle goodness, with what outpouring of mercy, did He not treat the Samaritan woman, the woman taken in adultery, and the penitent Magdalen. Reverently bow down be-

fore His zeal which was all for His Father's glory and for the salvation of souls. Oh, come, let us adore the Lord, the King of Apostles. If we desire to be pleasing to Him we must imitate His zeal, and help Him in His Divine work of saving souls. St. Denis the Areopagite says, that to co-operate with God in the salvation of souls is the most divine of all divine works. Never say that chilling word: What have I to do with other people's salvation? "Am I my brother's keeper?" St. Augustine bids us leave that ugly word to Cain. What! you have nothing to do with your brother? It is only with Satan that you have nothing in common. With other men, oh, how many things have we in common! We have the same Father, the same Redeemer, the same Church, the same destiny. The Wise Man tells us all to bear our brethren in mind: for God "gave to

every one of them, commandment concerning his neighbor." (Eccles. 17. 12.) Do then the divine work of helping souls whenever you are able, whenever there is hope of good arising therefrom and whenever you can without serious inconvenience. The Wise Man goes on to say: "The just considereth seriously the house of the wicked, that he may withdraw the wicked from evil." (Prov. 21. 12.) Honor therefore to the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, of St. Francis Regis and others of the same kind, whose members work strenuously to legalise marriages, to prevent scandals, to stop disorders and pacify divisions in the families they relieve. With the bread they give for the body, they also provide spiritual food for the souls of those whom they visit. All honor too, to all who meet together in the various Catholic clubs and guilds for the young, in diocesan Committees,

in Catholic Congresses, the object of which is to desseminate good principles, encourage good works, defend Catholic interests and bind all Catholics together in the common effort of stemming the torrent of evil which daily grows stronger and more menacing.

Among the disorders against which these committees specially do battle three may be noted, for they are the ones which more than any are aiming at rooting out Christianity and leading modern society to rank paganism.

The first is the godless school. Liberalism is making superhuman efforts to establish schools without faith or religion. We must labor without ceasing to oppose Christian schools to these. We must prevent our children from being inoculated with this atheism, which would be the greatest of all misfortunes. The Senator Belcastel observes very truly, that the school is the soul of the

child; the child is the future of humanity. If therefore we allow these atheists to have their way, we shall soon have a society without God. What a calamity! The child, besides being abandoned defenseless, orphaned of father and mother, will be orphaned moreover of God. In the poisonous cup of atheism is mingled a slow subtle poison that goes straight to the heart of the child killing his soul, and that so quietly and silently that there is no complaint for the child is hurt without so much as perceiving it. It is for you Christian parents, as soon as you see the approach of the poisoned cup, to spring to your feet and to cry out as one man against these poisoners and destroyers of your children's souls.

The second is the profanation of Sundays and Holy days of Obligation. What a sad sight meets the eye on Sundays in many great Catholic cities. The

shops are open, building operations are going on with as much hurry and noise as on week days. Can any one guess whether we are in a Christian or a pagan center? Is religion to be thus insulted? It behoves us then to rise in protest against such an insult, and to use all the means in our power to stop it. We must protest by example, never allowing any one depending upon us to work on Sundays. Also by word, frankly advising the shop-keepers and work-people we happen to know to respect the Lord's day. And we must protest also by act, preferring to deal with those tradesmen who keep the Sunday holy, rather than with those who neglect that sacred duty.

The third is bad newspapers. This is the canker of our modern civilization. The worst of it is that many even among practicing Catholics, though they condemn bad newspapers, read

them, buy them, associate themselves with them. Reader are you one of these? Do you not see that by so doing you are directly co-operating in the diffusion of the very iniquity you condemn? The larger part of the guilt of these journalists is on the shoulders of their readers: without readers there would be no journalists. It is a horrible thing to pay money to those sacrilegious pens, which daily and hourly besmirch the most sacred things with gall and poison. It is our money which puts weapons into the hands of the enemies of all we hold most dear both in Heaven and on earth. Oh, but some newspapers are absolutely necessary. Very true. But then the color of the newspaper should correspond to the color of its readers. If you are an unbeliever read atheistic papers, if you are a Catholic, in Heaven's name read Catholic papers. Oh, but Catholic

papers have no news and are dull besides. If such is the case do you know the reason? They have but little money. If you and all Catholics were banded together to support the Catholic press, and see to its diffusion as the Liberals and Republicans and Socialists are united for the benefit of their press, you may take it that Catholic journalism would triumph under every aspect over the journalism of whatever party you please.

Another objection: Catholic papers are too pugnacious and violent. Well, perhaps: moderation is all very well, but it ought not to degenerate into the weakness which prevents any lifting of the voice against the enemies of God and the Church. St. Francis de Sales for all his sweetness wrote: "When the wolves are prowling about true charity to the sheep makes us lustily cry: Wolf." He was of another mind than

certain too moderate people, who are always complaining of the violence and vehemence of the good. According to them the wolf is, after all, not so bad as he seems: he only needs patting and coaxing. Even if he sometimes gives chase to the sheep, what then? Silly creatures, they provoke him with their running and bleating, and are quite rightly served if he occasionally eats them. Why cannot they stay in their folds, and keep humble and meek and quiet without all that useless noise? The shepherds ought to keep the sheep quiet, instead of harrying the wolf, for he really is, in spite of his fierce looks, their best friend?

These are some of the principal fields in which Catholic activity can be developed and so become a real apostolate. From which apostolate the weaker sex is by no means excluded. On certain

occasions indeed it can be of more use than the sterner sex.

Begin by the family: There is woman's temple and sanctuary. Beautiful and sublime is her position in the precincts of the home, beside the husband who loves her, surrounded by the children happily playing round her, the servants devoted to her and readily obeying her slightest wish. She directs all in calmness and peace. Her position, as I have said, is sublime, and principally for this reason; that she looks upon all these beloved beings as so many trusts given into her hand by God, that she may lead them to the blessed country where He expects us all one day. She knows that man even when he is a Christian sometimes neglects his religious duties, either from stress of work or business, or from worldly dissipations and distractions.

Therefore, she reminds him of them suggesting a short prayer morning and night, or putting before him the abstinences of the Church, or the receiving of the Sacraments at least on the principal feasts. And so by her gentle influence the husband given her by God as a companion if bad, gradually becomes good, if tepid he becomes more fervent, and if already fervent, he becomes perfect.

How often have I seen the words of St. Paul verified that "the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the believing wife." (1 Cor. 7. 14.) The same with regard to the children. What pains she takes even from their earliest years, to instil into their minds the first notions of piety. She trembles at the mere shadow of a snare to their innocence. With what vigilance she watches over them to foresee and turn aside anything that might lead them

astray. She has received them from God: she must give them back to Him, and therefore she spares neither counsels nor caresses nor correction to lead them to Him. Meanwhile she does not neglect her servants. Considering herself as their mother, she loves and rules and watches over them with the care of a mother. She sees to it that while fulfilling the duties they owe to their earthly masters, they shall attend also to the service of the great Master in Heaven.

Must she, like a dove, remain always shut up in her tower? It is undoubtedly her home: but it need not be a perpetual imprisonment. She must occasionally leave it to exercise her apostolate in society. Not that she should become a preacher or a zealot: but that at the proper time and opportunity she should use her tact and good sense, the confidence that others repose in her, to-

gether with their good opinion and affection, to say a few good words, to give some wise advice or even a timely warning. In this way she can do much good and obtain results which priests might strive for in vain. Woman can also do much for the Church. All that has to do with the external worship of the Church, the ornaments of the altars, the sacred vestments, are often provided by them, the work even in many cases of their own hands. In other more weighty works too their help can be of great advantage.

At the end of the 18th Century, France was in the throes of a religious and social revolution, even more disastrous than the one the world is witnessing to-day in France and Italy and other countries. What was the remedy to be looked for in such circumstances? The clergy certainly never fell short of

its arduous duties. But the clergy dispersed, exiled, massacred by hundreds, reduced to a handful, which had escaped prison and death, were in hiding in private houses; their strength was not equal to their zeal and devotedness. All that the clergy had to leave undone in those days of blood was nobly supplemented by women.

As God could not be adored in public He was devoutly worshiped in the secret of modest homes the rooms of which, turned into chapels, took the place of the Churches, which had been burnt and destroyed all over the face of the country. In those secluded sanctuaries religious instruction was given, the Sacraments administered, the Holy Sacrifice offered all in great part through the help of women. When at last Bonaparte supplanted Robespierre, and religion began to rise her head, it was still women from whom the greatest

impulse came, they who prepared the ground for its future triumph. So that it can be truly said, that it was woman who saved the sacred leaven of faith in the midst of the French revolution, she who kept alive the sacred fire, as Jeremiah of old in the midst of the Chaldaic destruction. When the Church has to weep in sorrow over so many of her unworthy erring sons, may it not be the task of her faithful daughters to dry her tears and comfort her stricken heart? Among her daughters, how many are consecrated in cloisters to God, and are incessantly praying and drawing down His pity upon their Mother. In the warfare the Church has ever to sustain, the prayer of Moses on the mount is of greater efficacy than the fighting of Josue and his army on the field of battle.

Prayer is an omnipotent though peaceful and bloodless weapon. All

can wield it, all can take part in the holy war by the side of Moses, all can be of use in obtaining the victory. And of all who contribute to the victory, none can do so more effectually than nuns, who, according to Belcastel, are preëminently the voices of prayer. From their heart it rises more pure and penetrating to God Who looks upon it with divine complacency. He finds in it an indescribable something that reminds Him of the heart He formed, with such infinite love, for the Blessed among women. Be faithful, ye consecrated Virgins, to your sacred mission. Pray from your inmost souls for yourselves, for your convents, your country, for the whole Church of God, so that we may confidently hope for the return of peace to the world.

CHAPTER XII

JESUS, KING OF CONFESSORS

Come, let us adore the Lord, the King of Confessors! The confession of faith is the chief obligation of all Christians. As it is sometimes difficult to fulfill this obligation Our Divine Redeemer willed to give us in this respect a splendid example.

His Heavenly doctrine which is the object of our faith, and of our profession, was proclaimed by Him in the face of obstacles of all kinds. His preaching was far from being univer-

sally or favorably accepted. There was a certain class of persons who were favorable to Him, who heard Him willingly and followed Him whithersoever He went, but as St. Augustine says, even among these, not a few were satisfied with admiring Him, without being themselves converted. Another class was indifferent to Him and careless. "I am become a stranger to my brethren, and an alien to the sons of my mother." (Ps. 68. 9.) These were mostly the rich and the prosperous. Filled with the good things of the world they cared nothing for the eternal goods of Heaven. To them, therefore, the new prophet who constantly spoke of the Kingdom of Heaven, inculcating the contempt of the world, was wearisome and distasteful. Some after having heard Him several times returned no more: we can imagine what that means. Others did not go even

once to hear Him. Others again, may have said to-morrow, and to-morrow never dawned for them. "All the day long have I spread my hands to a people that believeth not, and contradicteth me." (Rom. 10. 21.)

There was indeed a third class that openly contradicted Him. They were adverse and hostile to Him. These were the Scribes and Pharisees who always strove to rouse the people against Him. They attacked Him with every species of calumny and contumely, calling Him a wine bibber, a blasphemer, a seducer of the people, even a demoniac. "They have sharpened their tongues like a serpent: the venom of asps is under their lips." (Ps. 139. 4.) Not only their tongues were sharpened against Him, but their hands were stretched out to do Him hurt: as when they took up stones to cast at Him, when they brought Him to the brow of

a hill that they might fling Him down headlong, when they tried other means of destroying Him, so that He was obliged to put forth His omnipotence to escape from them as His hour had not come.

Did He ever desist from proclaiming His doctrine on account of all these persecutions? Never! Did He not minimize it in the least? Never! Nor throw a veil over the two dogmas of His Divinity and of the Blessed Eucharist, which had the most irritated and scandalized them? Never! So far from doing so the more His enemies attacked Him, the more firmly did He again proclaim His divine truths, though He knew that His life at last was to pay the penalty.

Indeed, the open, sublime confession of His Divinity before Caiphas, was, as He knew it would be, His condemnation to death by the whole Sanhedrim.

"Then the High Priest rent his garments saying: He hath blasphemed. . . . What think you? But they answering said: He is guilty of death." (Matt. 26. 65. 66.) Thus, at the cost of outrages, reproaches, calumnies, at the cost of life itself did He always and openly and fearlessly proclaim His doctrine. "Come, let us adore the Lord, the King of Confessors."

After having contemplated and adored Him, we must also imitate Him by the frank profession of the Christian faith and the devout life, thus generously overcoming every kind of human respect. Many are Christians at heart, but are ashamed openly to profess Christianity. They hide their banner, just as the thief hides his booty. They outwardly follow the fashion rather than their conscience. And as fashion is now turned to liberalism in politics, and rationalism in religion, so these peo-

ple, in spite of the pricks of conscience, masquerade as Liberals and Rationalists. Such cowardice is more shameful nowadays than it ever was before.

Shameful indeed it is, in an age when all loudly proclaim liberty, when the very air seems to be impregnated with liberty, that you should deliberately throw away your liberty as a reasonable being, the liberty that consists in professing and freely practising truth and justice and morality. You smother deep down in your soul your profoundest convictions, your dearest feelings, that you may speak and act and live as others wish. What else is this but to speak and act and live as a slave? Once for all shake off this shameful yoke: live in true liberty, in the rightful independence of a man conscious of his own dignity, who feels he is a man not a machine, master of himself not the plaything of others.

After all, why have people such difficulty in openly professing themselves Christians? Are they afraid of the threat that they shall be stoned, or thrown from the mountain as Jesus was threatened? Do they fear, that like Him, they will be covered with ignominy, treated as demoniacs? Were it even so, the example of their leader should make all these things less bitter to them, His followers.

But so far from having to suffer as He did, the worst than can befal them is to find themselves called by the nickname of "Clericals." Is there anything very opprobrious or infamous in such a name? Is it like the name Beelzebub which was one among the many shameful names hurled at our Divine Master? After all, what does it mean?

A Clerical, according to the sound and meaning of the word, is a man who is with the clergy, that is to say with the

Ministers of God, with the Elders of Israel, the princes of the holy people. Is that ignominious? It is true that nowadays in many European countries the Clergy is oppressed; but I am not aware that it has ever been thought an odious thing to sympathise with the oppressed rather than with the oppressors.

Consider too, the practical meaning of the name Clerical. He is a man who belongs to the Church not only in name but in heart and by his works, a Christian who, true to his principles, wishes Jesus Christ to be King of modern society, as He was King of society in the ages of faith; that His law should dominate every other law, that His sovereignty should rule every other power. The Clerical is also the man who, while rendering to Cæsar the things that are Cæsar's, will suffer no curtailment of what is due to God, to His Church, to His Vicar or His Ministers.

In any conflict between the two authorities, he boldly proclaims that the King of Heaven is the first to whom he has sworn obedience, and that we must obey God rather than men. The Clerical is also the man who, while appreciating all that really constitutes civilization, cannot endure that the mind should be wholly immersed in material things, or that Heaven should be thrown aside for the things of the world. Nor can he suffer the Church to be calumniated in the name of science, or attacked in the name of progress, or chained in the name of liberty.

The Clerical has no other faith than the faith of the Vatican, therefore he professes himself simply a Catholic without adding anything to that name. To his mind the name of Catholic would be insulted by adding to it any epithet, even shining with liberty by way of adding to it luster or vigor. Such is the

Clerical. Is his name one of ignominy or rather of glory? Many, I know, prefer to be called Liberal Catholics, but this hybrid name must really be left to those who always like two strings to their bow, who light two candles, one to St. Michael, and the other which is also the bigger, to Lucifer. Their first care is to be Liberals, after which, if such a thing is possible, they would like to be Catholics.

As for us we will hold fast by our own fine name of plain Catholics, even if it pleases our scoffers of clerical Catholics, and not be ashamed of it through life.

The Catholic newspapers of France in the year 1899 reported an incident which had lately occurred in a military school. A little rosary was one day found on the ground, fallen evidently out of the pocket of one of the students. The young fellow who picked it up be-

ing a free-thinker, was highly entertained at his find, and promised himself a good laugh at the next meeting of the school at the expense of the owner of what he called a ridiculous toy. Accordingly when all were assembled he lifted the rosary on high, before the eyes of all the young men, and triumphantly smiling and sneering he cried: "Now let us see who is the Clerical that will have the courage to claim this toy as his property!" Hardly were the words out of his mouth, than a young man who a few days before had been promoted in public Examination to be head of the school, came forward with fearless dignity and boldly declared: "The rosary is mine. It is a present from my mother which I keep and use also. So doing, I do not think I have ever dishonored the school!"—"Well done, well done!" broke out from all parts of the hall, and the

colonel added: "He who can so fearlessly profess his faith, will be able when the occasion offers to give his life for his country."

While men are called Clericals by infidels and unbelievers, women are jeered at by another name of reproach hurled at them. If a woman is seen going often to Church, frequenting the Sacraments, "Oh," they say, "Poor thing! she is a devotee or bigot." Poor thing indeed! she is far from being an object of pity. Pity yourselves instead for you need it. The name devotee is no ignominy, rather is it a glory. The Church has applied it herself as a glorious name to women, when she begs Our Lady "to intercede for the devout female sex."

Those who jeer at devotion do not and never will understand the true meaning of the word devout. To be devout as the word indicates, is the

same thing as to have what the French call *dévouement,* a word which it is impossible perfectly to translate into English, but which means a fervent consecrating of oneself, even at the cost of self sacrifice to the service of a person or an idea. Now the devout woman consecrates herself wholly to the service of God, she dedicates herself to the grand Christian ideal which she wishes to be perfectly realized in herself. Can there be on earth a consecration more noble or more splendid than this?

But what does all this separation from the world mean, and this avoiding of theaters and entertainments and all these Confessions and Communions, and so many hours wasted in church? What is all this but superstition and exaggeration?

Well, wait a moment! Exaggeration is one thing, fervor quite another. But in practice it is not always so easy

to distinguish one from the other, especially if people have not much experience in such matters. Very often those who are so much afraid that others do too much, are the very people who never do even what is absolutely necessary. While crying out against the fire, they themselves are stiffening in the midst of ice.

You say that to abstain from certain worldly amusements, to frequent the Church and the Sacraments is an exaggeration. Why, cannot you see therein, on the contrary, the fervent devotion of a soul which finds its nourishment and pleasure in these religious practices? Tastes are not all alike as everybody knows. What wonder that the pleasure you find in the world the devout find in Church. I do not ask you to do the same. Oh, no! The roads by which God guides souls are all different, so are the grades of perfection

He requires of them. Go you by the road you prefer, one more easy it may be, but do not put obstacles in the way of those who intend to walk in the safe narrow way. Is it not just that you should allow others some small portion of the liberty you claim for yourself?

But, you say again, what can be the use of all those little practices into which devout persons so often throw themselves headlong? What use are they? But do you not see, that although practical piety does not consist only in these pious practices, they do nevertheless nourish and foment piety? You say these practices are frivolous but may I ask what are your great works, your sublime occupations? Is the incessant anxiety you display in dressing and behaving according to the last fashion a very sublime work? And you care that your clothes should be cut on one pattern rather than on

another, your hair tortured into the fashionable arrangement, and you yourself the slave of a thousand follies which follow one another in a ceaseless round, are all these things, I ask, grand works? Then, is it a sublime occupation to spend your mornings partly in bed, partly in the engrossing occupations of your toilet, and your days in idle visits, in foolish reading, and your evenings and nights in talking gossip and scandal or attending scandalous plays? Are all these occupations so serious and grave that they give you the right of throwing in the teeth of the devout what you call the frivolity and littleness of their pious practices?

Nevertheless after all said and done, I always must advise the devout so to behave as to give no handle for censure to the worldly. In order that all devout persons may easily do so, I shall draw for you in a few words the true portrait

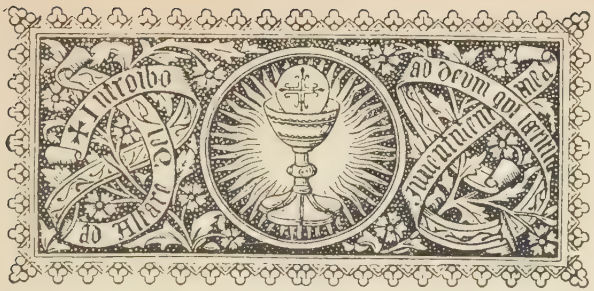
of a soul which practices devotion in the best and truest manner.

The truly devout soul keeps God in mind and heart above all things, it studies to please and serve and love Him with all its strength. Nevertheless it never forgets that it lives among men. In its exercises of devotion therefore, it carefully guards against any affectation, or singularity, or exaggerated posturing, all of which things are displeasing to God, highly irritating to men, and always productive of more harm than good. Then, besides the duty he owes to God, the devout man knows that he owes a duty also to his family. He is therefore always careful that although his religious exercises have the first place, they do not encroach upon the time which ought to be given to household duties, to the education of his children, to looking after his servants, to attending to his business

and to the other duties of his state of life. To his domestic duties are added many social duties; and these he never wilfully neglects. He is the first to go where he is called by the claim of politeness, courtesy or social custom. All these he faithfully observes as long as they do not conflict with a more pressing duty or with the laws of God. As he loves God alone, he is not inordinately attached to any of his devout practices. He has no difficulty in suspending or interrupting them, whenever necessary for the peace and quiet of his family, or for helping his neighbor, or for some other good reason. Carefully avoiding all sin, he is nevertheless not scandalized at the weakness of others. His zeal is not bitter or intolerant, and he is therefore full of compassion and charity for the erring. Exact in his occupations but not fidgety, modest in his person but not affected, simple but

not careless in his dress, recollected but not morose, fervent but not imprudent, zealous without being importunate, respectful with his superiors, pleasant with his equals, kindly with his inferiors, forbearing with all: such is the man who is truly devout. Can you find fault with any of these things? Rather are they not the very things to love and to praise and to imitate?

Do not say that this type is ideal not practical. Of such a type were the saints, St. Francis de Sales, St. John Berchmans, St. Rose of Viterbo and nearer our own days Marie Eustelle and many others. Look round among your acquaintances; you will find more than one soul like the model I have shown you, which is the true model of all devout persons; a model which makes true devotion always lovely and attractive even to the worldly and indifferent.



CHAPTER XIII

JESUS, KING OF VIRGINS

Come, let us adore the Lord, the King of Virgins! From the first moment of Our Lord's life here below it was easy to see how much He loved chastity, especially when carried to its highest point of virginal purity. He, "Who feedeth among the lilies" (Cant. 2. 16), loved to be always surrounded by lilies. He willed that His foster father should bear always the lily of purity, that His Blessed Mother should lift her head as a fragrant lily above all

the fair flowers that were ever to bloom in His garden.

To show how he valued the virginal maternity of His Mother, He revealed it centuries before to His great Prophet Isaias: "The Lord Himself shall give you a sign: Behold a Virgin shall conceive, and bear a son, and His name shall be called Emmanuel." (Is. 7. 14.) Before beginning His apostolic life the way was prepared for Him by the preaching of John the Baptist, whose austere virtue was like the lily of the mountains; while the other John, who was pure as the lily in the enclosed garden of the Spouse, was to be His best beloved, and as such was allowed to lean upon His Breast at the Last Supper and to take charge of His Blessed Mother, the being He loved best on earth. To him, as we read in the Gospel, did Jesus commend His Mother, the virgin of virgins.

Many spiritual writers note the fact that among all the calumnies hurled against Jesus during the whole of His public life, among which were even the charges of being possessed by the devil and of being a blasphemer, not even the merest hint was uttered against His chastity. The occasion and the pretext would not have been wanting to His enemies for such an accusation. They saw Him often conversing with sinners, such as the Samaritan woman and Magdalen. But they also saw His reserve, the Majesty of His aspect, the reflection of the hidden Divinity illuminating His countenance. Criticism was disarmed, and suspicion changed into involuntary veneration and admiration.

On this point how full of holy reticence were His blessed words. The very name of the unclean sin never crossed His lips. When He would

inculcate the opposite virtue with what infinite delicacy and reserve did He always speak: "Blessed are the clean of heart." (Matt. 5. 8.) O, let us bow down and silently and reverently adore the Divine Purity of the Lord, the King of Virgins.

There are three kinds of chastity. Conjugal chastity, the chastity of widows and that of virgins. The last is the most acceptable to the Lord though He accepts all three, and though one or other is necessary to man according to the state of life to which Providence has called him.

These three states of chastity can be considered under three figures, the rose, the violet and the lily. Pleasing in the sight of God is the rose of conjugal chastity, with the thorns that entwine it. From it, the Lord expects new adorers on earth, new inmates for Heaven. The violet of widowed chastity is more

touching, for while on the one hand chastity itself is greater it also has the perfume of sorrow and tears. The chief honor before God is for the lily of virginal chastity, in which the Spouse delights, for "He feedeth among the lilies." (Cant. 2. 16.)

The heathens set no store by this flower. It was trampled underfoot in many of their religious feasts, though they honored it in the persons of the Vestal Virgins. Nor was it held honorable in Israel, but was rather considered a shame and a misfortune, for by reason of it Hebrew maidens lost the hope of concurring in some sort in the birth of the expected Messiah, a glory more desired by them than any other.

Mary alone among all the women of Judah discovered with angelic insight the hidden beauties of virginity. She alone heard the mysterious word that

none understood then, and that few even now are given to understand "all men take not this word, but they to whom it is given." (Matt. 19. 11.)

It is the opinion of the Fathers of the Church that Mary not only kept in her heart the pearl of great price mysteriously indicated to her; but that she was the first to bind herself by vow to keep it always intact. For this purpose and from the age of three years she retired to the temple of Jerusalem to offer herself to the Lord, the most acceptable holocaust which till then had ever risen from earth to Heaven. She had listened to the word of the Lord: "Hearken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear: and forget thy people, and thy father's house." The King of Heaven is taken with thy virginal beauty and would have thee all His own, for He is the Lord thy God and all nations shall adore Him. "The

King shall greatly desire thy beauty: for the Lord He is thy God, and Him shall they adore."

In the ages to come troops of virgins shall follow where thou leadest, a guard of honor to the King. "After her shall virgins be brought to the King: her neighbors shall be brought to thee. They shall be brought with gladness and rejoicing; they shall be brought into the temple of the King." (Ps. 44. 11-16.) Following her example, from that day to this, from one end of the world to the other, countless multitudes of virgins have devoted themselves to the service of the Immaculate Lamb of God. The glorious story of the Saints is full of their names and deeds. St. Agnes indignantly repels the advances of Procopius: "Begone, thou food of death! Another lover has already claimed me." And St. Cecilia warns Valerian: "See that

thou touch me not, for I am in the keeping of an Angel of the Lord." And St. Lucy fearlessly answers Pascasius: "If by force you trample on my lily, you only adorn me with a double crown." St. Agatha, St. Apollonia, St. Barbara and countless others like them, attacked in their honor or their faith or in both, wear out the fury of the tyrants and the cruelty of the executioners. "Oh, you of Israel that have willingly offered your lives to danger, bless the Lord. Hear O ye Kings, give ear ye princes. It is I, it is I, that will sing to the Lord, I will sing to the Lord God of Israel." (Judges 5. 3.)

And these glories do not belong alone to the early Church. Within the last few years we have witnessed similar deeds of heroism. Clementina Secchi, a child of fourteen, niece of Father Secchi the great astronomer, bravely

resisted the threats and blandishments of a wretch who attempted her dishonor, and fell at last a heroic victim under his murderous knife. Generous and noble victim, worthy to be one of the Virgin martyrs' choir, and to have her name written in letters of gold in the glorious annals of virginity.

Ah, but, you say, all this may be very beautiful, but it is only Mysticism. We must be practical in this world. Every maiden should have a husband.

I quite agree with you. Maidens cannot live without love, especially if they have certain qualities of mind and heart and body. It is but right they should have a husband. Do you think those blessed ones of whom I have been speaking have no husband? Oh, yes, they have indeed! and what a husband: you know him not, but St. Agnes, the child martyr of thirteen, shall describe him to you: "I am espoused to Him

whom the Angels serve, whose beauty outshines both sun and moon. . . . When I love Him I am chaste, when I touch Him I am pure, when I give myself to Him I am a virgin." (Off. St. Agnes.) O worldlings, I know full well that you cannot understand these things. "All men take not this word, but they to whom it is given." (Matt. 19. 11.) Nor is it necessary you should. They alone need understand the mystic word, those chosen souls, for they alone are the best judges of what is their own happiness. They ardently love their Spouse, and find blessedness untold in His love and service. Blessedness like that of the tiny bird nestling warm and safe under its mother's wings; of the tender dove hiding from rain and storm in the shelter of its nest; of the contented babe, drinking life and strength from its mother's breast; of the sad exile return-

ing to his native land; of the widowed mother rejoicing in the love of her only son. Blessedness such as this, nay, infinitely more than this, do the beloved of Christ enjoy.

Sceptics and scoffers understand nothing of these joys of the pure in heart, for they flow from heights which they can neither reach nor even imagine. Still unconvinced they declare all this to be nothing but Mysticism, and waste of time. Nuns according to them are a class entirely useless to the world. Useless indeed! and are they of such great use themselves either to the world or to their country?

The angels alone could tell all the good done by the prayers of those whom you call useless beings. How many evils are averted by the tears and sighs of these gentle doves. What disasters kept away from the world, which only returns these benefits by calumnies

and ostracism. Who can tell how often the anger of God, already armed to chastise a guilty city, has been appeased at the sight of the cloisters from which prayer is unceasingly offered to God. The little bell towers of humble convents have often been called, and with great reason, the lightning conductors of towns. Useless beings forsooth! Do you not see that people who have given up their own families as these nuns have, are more at liberty to devote themselves to others?

The first instruction and leading into the right way, especially of the poorest and most neglected class, can be confided to none better than to the celibates of the sanctuary or the convent. And who are they that are the most assiduous in visiting the humblest homes of the poor, and going through the wards of the hospitals, rendering cordial and loving service to the wretched wher-

ever they may be found? Often have we seen the nuns turned out of the hospitals, but more than once have they been recalled, as soon as it was perceived that morality, diligence and charity had, together with the nuns, been expelled therefrom.

Do you desire to destroy these beneficent institutions? In Heaven's name stay your hand. Let there be houses of prayer and penance, since you allow houses of sin. Let there be precincts resounding with the music of the divine praises, as there are meeting places for the blasphemies of the populace, or for those of cultivated impiety. Let there be those who pray for others, also for you who never pray for yourselves.

The unbelieving cry out again: convents and monasteries are old-fashioned survivals of the dark ages; they have had their day. Do you know when the day of the religious orders will be past?

At the consummation of the ages when the day of the Church will be past. But so long as the Church exists, so long also will the Religious Orders exist. I do not speak of any particular Religious Order when I say that Religious Orders in general will last as long as the Church. They are the most beautiful ornaments of the Church which appears before her divine Spouse adorned with them; as the queen standing on His "right hand, in gilded clothing, surrounded with variety." (Ps. 44. 10.)

So long as Jesus Christ is the Head and Spouse of the Church, so long will there be chosen souls who yearn after the observance, not only of His Commandments but also of His Counsels. Some in their own homes, others living together in common in the unity which produces strength. You may persecute the Religious, you will never suc-

ceed in destroying them. Expelled from one place or country they will establish themselves in another. Tear off their habit they will dress as seculars. Turn them out of the door, they will come back through the window; whether you will it or no, you will always have them in the midst of you.

Let us leave these unbelievers and persecutors to the mercy of God, that He may enlighten them and give them wisdom.

As for you, O devout souls who guard your virginal purity, either in your own homes or in the shadow of the cloister, remember that this lily is a delicate flower. You needs must guard and defend it by mortification. So doing your life will be holy and happy, and will be crowned with a peaceful and happy death. I have seen more than one such death. Among others, a young nun of twenty, in dying,

made on me and on all who were privileged to witness her last moments, a most consoling and joyful impression. Her pure soul ardently longing to be united to Her Divine Spouse seemed to taste already the joys of Heaven, and her ears closing to the sounds of earth, seemed to catch far away echoes of the Angel's songs. Her end was not only peace but exulting joy and perfect happiness.

CHAPTER XIV

JESUS, KING OF MARTYRS

Come, let us adore the Lord, the King of Martyrs. It is evident from all that we read in the Gospel, that the whole life of Our Divine Redeemer, from the cradle to the grave, was a crown of thorns, a long chain of afflictions of every kind. The author of the Imitation points this out: "The whole life of Christ was a cross and a martyrdom." (Imit. 2. 12.)

The pains and sorrows spread over the whole course of His life continu-

ally increased in strength and bitterness. Like a rushing stream, every moment gaining volume and speed, all the waters of grief flowed at last into that ocean of sorrows, His most blessed Passion.

It was a threefold martyrdom that He then suffered. A martyrdom of the heart, of the spirit and of the body. Let us devoutly study this King of Martyrs, that we may learn from Him salutary lessons for ourselves.

The first thing to consider is: was this threefold martyrdom necessary for the salvation of the world? No, by no means. Indeed, so far from being necessary, it would have amply sufficed for the salvation of the world, if instead of shedding His Precious Blood, He had shed one tear or had done even less than that.

Why, then, was so much more suffered by Him? Because such was His

will: "He was offered, because it was His own will." (Is. 53. 7.) And He willed it for two reasons. First to give us great lessons, and second to prove His infinite love for us, "for His exceeding charity wherewith He loved us." (Eph. 2. 4.)

And yet with all this has He succeeded in inducing us to do, on our part, what we ought to do in His Divine service? Christian soul, compare the sacrifices He has made for you with the sacrifices you are sometimes called upon to make for His sake. What indeed are your sacrifices? To endure an offensive word without resentment, or to repress some irregular desire, or to be detached from some object which unduly engages your heart! All acts and sufferings which, if gathered together in one, would not weigh even as heavily as the title nailed to His Cross. And yet, what repugnance, what diffi-

culties and murmurings when you have to submit to any of these things! What minute questionings: am I obliged to do this? Could I not do less? Would it be a sin to neglect doing this or that? Woe to us, if Our Blessed Jesus had been content to do for us only what was of strict necessity. When He has been so liberal, so generous, so prodigal of His Precious Blood, shall we be so grudging and stingy and mean with Him? Oh let us be ashamed of our pusillanimity and humbly contemplate His martyrdom, not so much that we may compassionate Him only but that we may above all imitate Him.

Behold Him then, in the Garden under the shade of the olive trees, in the silence of night, in that profound solitude. Even before His Blessed Body has begun to suffer, the agonized martyrdom of His Heart overwhelms

Him. At the sight of all the torments prepared for Him, at the thought of the ingratitude with which men will repay Him, through what horrible straits of sadness, fear and anguish does He not pass. Wishing to express His consternation He can find no truer description than to call it a mortal agony: "My soul is sorrowful even unto death." (Matt. 26. 38.) An agony so painful that it forces the blood from His veins in such abundance that it flows down upon the ground: "And His sweat became as drops of blood, trickling down upon the ground." (Luke 22. 44.) An agony so excruciating, that it forces from His lips a cry to His Father, which ends in the resigned Fiat: "My Father, if it be possible, let this chalice pass from Me. Nevertheless, not as I will, but as Thou wilt." (Matt. 26. 39.)

Such is His expiation for our sins

of the heart. All sins indeed more or less come from the heart, as He Himself has taught us: "For from the heart come forth evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false testimonies, blasphemies" (Matt. 15. 9), but He specially expiated in His agony disorderly attachments, sympathies, loves. Do you cherish any such? If you do, oh, take knife in hand and cut them out without mercy, no matter at what cost, at what tearing of the most intimate fibres of your heart. Take courage, look at Jesus in the garden sweating blood for you. Have you yet reached to such a height? Oh, no! "For you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." (Heb. 12. 4.)

But perhaps it is not this you need at present. A comfort rather than a stimulus is what your soul craves. There are times in life when the future

stretches out before us in a long perspective of pain and misfortune. If I should have to go to such a place, if I should not get that employment, if I should lose that law-suit, if such an affair should turn out badly, what is to become of me? What a wretched life, what sad days, how many bitter disappointments to be swallowed, what thorns at every step! And then the heated imagination at once paints a picture all in the darkest colors and weeping, wailing and despair ensue.

When things get to such a pass in those souls which have lost the faith, they consider suicide as the only deliverance possible.

The good Christian on the contrary, in his worst trouble remembers Gethsemani. He thinks of the sad perspective that was then opened before Jesus, and of the mortal agony to which such a sight reduced Him. In order to en-

courage us to suffer, He Himself, like a tender Father, first suffered anguish untold: "For we have not a High Priest, who cannot have compassion on our infirmities: but one tempted in all things like as we are, without sin." (Heb. 4. 15.)

What a difference between His sufferings and ours! And how did He behave? Did He give Himself up as vanquished? Or recoil from carrying out the dread office, committed to Him by the Father? We indeed often fly from the Cross prepared for us, and bitterly murmur against the creatures through whom it seems to have come to us: But He not so. To show us that He was not insensible to these sufferings, He allowed the inferior appetite to manifest His repugnance: "Let this Chalice pass from Me," but at once, the Superior Will added: "Not My will, but Thine be done," and in

that acceptance He remained unmoved till death.

This is what we also must do. We are not forbidden to cry out: "Let this chalice pass from me," provided these words are followed by a firm and resolute acceptance. "Not my will, but Thine be done!" This submission will not be difficult for Jesus Himself is our Comforter. He lifts His pale face bedewed with the painful sweat and turning says to us: "See how dearly I have purchased your salvation. My Heart is crushed under the weight of sorrow which forces the blood from my body. Will you find it hard to suffer some affliction for My love? When I have drunk of this bitter chalice, will you not have courage to swallow a few drops clinging to the edges of the cup? Taste and see; you will not find it so hard to put your lips where I have already drunk; on the contrary the

draught will become sweet and comforting."

To the martyrdom of His Heart was added the martyrdom of His spirit; namely, the deepest and most degrading humiliation. See Him as He enters Jerusalem, in how different a way to His joyous entry but a few days ago. Then it was a triumph, now He comes in chains led by the lowest servants of the Chief Priests. Then the multitudes thronged to see Him pass, following Him with branches of palms and olives, singing glad Hosannas; now they point Him out to each other as a malefactor. Then He was hailed as the Son of David, now He is an object of public execration. From what a height, into what an abyss has He fallen! A salutary remembrance is this for you, if you were ever to fall from a high position to one of

humiliation, a thing by no means rare in this world!

And this was only the prelude to other intolerable outrages to which the way exposed in the various tribunals. Behold His Divine Countenance red, livid, bruised, under the shameful blow of a servant. His adorable Person in the house of Caiphas at the mercy of the vilest servants and hangers-on of the High Priest's household. During the whole night they load Him with outrages and insults and turn Him into a laughing-stock. Such was the consideration shown to Jesus. And you, how sensitive you are on this point! How furious you are if any one is the least wanting in the respect you consider due to your person or your condition!

By Herod He was treated as a fool. By Pilate He was compared with

Barabbas. If any one younger or of less account than you, is preferred before you, what a storm in your heart, what bitter complaints on your lips!

Then consider the ignominy of being stripped of His garments, to be scourged as a slave! Of being crowned with thorns, and made to bear a reed instead of a sceptre, and to be jeered and ridiculed as a mock king with blasphemous jibes and taunts. All these insults show with what reason He could say with His Prophet: "Because for thy sake I have borne reproach, shame hath covered My face." (Ps. 68. 8.) In this shameful state Pilate shows Him to the people saying: "Behold the man." Behold him Whom you have delivered up to me. And Jesus seems also to say: Behold the Man! Yes! I am the Man: but in such a state that "I am a worm and

no man: the reproach of men and the outcast of the people." (Ps. 21. 7.)

Oh, men, you raise yourselves in your pride, even above the condition of men, while I, to repair your pride have humbled Myself so far as to lose even the semblance of man: "I am become a worm and no man." At the sight of this "worm and no man," human pride is cast down. Before that thorn-crowned Head exposed to the mockery of the lowest soldiery, the thorns of humiliation or of any other sorrow lose their sharpest sting and are invested with a certain sacred and august dignity which makes them more desirable than all the jeweled crowns of earth. Oh, kiss those thorns that pierced the sacred Head of Jesus. His Precious Blood with which they are stained will strengthen us to bear all the sorrows of life with patient resignation.

Let us ascend the mountain, the hill

of incense, upon which the Adorable Victim is about to accomplish His sublime holocaust. To the martyrdom of the heart and the spirit is also joined the martyrdom of the body. Behold Him hanging between heaven and earth, His Hands and Feet pierced through with nails, His whole body covered with gaping wounds and horrible bruises and lacerations. Truly had the Prophet described Him as "a man of sorrows, and acquainted with infirmity." (Is. 53. 3.) Too justly did the passers by think of Him as it were a leper, and as one struck by God and afflicted." (Is. 53. 4.)

See in what fashion He makes reparation for our sensual pleasures. Worldlings say: "Let us fill ourselves with costly wine and ointments, and let not the flower of time pass by us; let us crown themselves with roses, before they be withered; let no meadow escape our

riot." (Wisd. 2. 7. 8.) Jesus pays for our roses with His thorns, for our ointments with His Blood.

All modern civilization and progress aims at nothing else but the satisfaction of all our appetites, and the glorification of flesh in every conceivable way. Softness, sensuality, pleasure, such is the aim and object of modern life.

To all of which Jesus opposes His nails, His thorns, His Cross. The sight of the Cross filled the Saints with a whole order of thoughts and feelings diametrically opposite to those of worldlings. Not only did they resolve never to content the flesh, but in order in some sort to resemble Jesus they burned with the desire of suffering of every kind with an ardor greater than that with which worldlings yearn after enjoyment. They felt a singular delight. In suffering a delight, bitter it is true, but of an agreeable bitterness

which they would not have exchanged for any earthly sweetness.

This holy delight in suffering will always be a mystery to the world, but not for that is it less true. Enraptured by this delight St. Teresa exclaims: "Oh, to suffer, or to die!" St. Mary Magdalen de Pazzi: "To suffer and not to die!" St. Margaret Mary Alacoque, the great disciple of the Sacred Heart, writes to her superior: "Oh, my dear Mother, how terribly hard it is to live without loving God! How can we love a crucified God, without loving the Cross, without living and dying on the Cross? Let others rejoice in ascending Mount Thabor with my Divine Redeemer; for my part, as I find no other delight but in the Cross, I am content to know no other road, but that which leads to Calvary." In our own time, the devout Marie Eustelle expressed

the same profound thought in a few brief words: "Great souls have their Mount Thabor on Calvary!" When these devout souls contemplate Jesus Crucified, one drop of His bitter chalice, one thorn of His crown, one splinter of His Cross, is for them the most precious of gifts.

Are these our feelings? Oh, if we can not with the Saints desire sufferings, at least let us not complain when they come upon us. At least, let us not under a Head crowned with thorns insist upon being members crowned with roses. Nor let us say as we so often and so easily do: "I can bear no more!" Look at Jesus. He surely is unable to bear His Cross for He falls under its weight. Yes, He falls but it is to rise again at once. Why do you lie helpless as if dead under your Cross? Take heart at the sight of His sufferings.

Before leaving Calvary salute the Cross of our Redeemer, our only hope and comfort in this exile. When in sorrow raise your eyes to it, pour out your tears at its foot, and comfort and soothing will flow from it into your soul. O Cross of Jesus Christ! for my love the Divine Victim was stretched within Thy stern embrace, and there bowed His head in death. Life has come to us from thee, thou altar and throne of Christ. I kiss thy rugged wood purple with His Blood. Oh, may He give me contrite tears to mingle with that precious stream, and so blot out my sins. When my last hour has come my failing eyes shall seek thee, O blessed Cross, my trembling hands shall hold thee in loving clasp. Oh, comfort and support me through the shadows of death, and guide me to the safety of His arms, Who to save me hung in agony on thee. When my body sleeps

in death, may thy shadow keep watch above my grave, that I may rest in peace till the angel's trumpet shall summon me to rise. Oh, may I then rejoice to see thee borne in glorious triumph before the Lord. And may He, my crucified King, then bid me share His splendid victory, and joyfully follow the Standard of His Cross.

CHAPTER XV

JESUS, KING OF ALL SAINTS

Come, let us adore the King of kings and Lord of lords, for He is the crown of all the Saints.

The chief error and the most pernicious crime of the present day is the refusal to recognize the Divinity of Christ. I do not speak of the people, for among them by God's mercy the treasure of faith is still to a great extent preserved. But I speak of those who, by one title or another, raise them-

selves above the crowd, and who make their voices gravely resound in parliaments, in universities and in books.

Of many of these it may be truly said: "Their throat is an open sepulchre." (Ps. 5. 11.) If the adorable name of Jesus passes the lips of some of the more impious blasphemers they insult It openly. But these others, teachers of men, forsooth, show a certain respect for His holy Name. They grant everything, they agree to everything, they recognize everything except the one thing most important of all; and that is His Divinity.

Following Strauss and Renan, the rationalists declare: "Jesus Christ was a great philosopher, a great teacher of morality, a great legislator, in short a great man but a mere man." And thus through these clouds of incense the Divinity is obscured, hidden, totally denied. But in spite of all the efforts of

all the Renans past, present and future, the Divinity of Christ remains and will remain for evermore.

For those whose eyes are not clouded by passion, the Divinity shines out in the Redeemer from every part, as well as from His virtues which we have been studying together. Even if we did not insist upon the proposition that His holiness, taken alone, would incontrovertibly prove His Divinity, it is nevertheless certain that it is a shining reflection and the clearest indication thereof that can be imagined.

As for the positive proofs of His Divinity that one will suffice, which He Himself often put forward when speaking to the stiff-necked, hard-hearted Jews, the progenitors of our modern infidels: "Though you will not believe Me, believe the works." (John 10. 33.) As though He would have said: If you do not believe My word when

I proclaim My Divine Nature, at least believe the works with which I prove and manifest it. Believe the testimony of the blind who see, the deaf who hear, the sick who are healed, the dead who are raised to life at My word. Believe in the proof of this temple of My Body, which three days after it is destroyed by death shall rise again. These works which I do to confirm My word, presuppose a Divine virtue, they carry the seal of the Divinity. Believe them at least. This is the mos tangible and brilliant proof of the Divinity of Christ. Add to this; the accomplishment to the letter of all the prophecies relating to Him, the total transformation He made of the whole world by His doctrine and teaching, and other proofs of the same nature. Among these last, His incomparable Sanctity must not be omitted. It not only strengthens the fundamental proof, but it also lights up and

sweetly shows forth the rays of the hidden Divinity.

Monseigneur Bougaud in his book "Christianity and Our Own Times" has many beautiful thoughts on this point. "That which strikes me most forcibly," he writes, "in this unique sanctity of Our Lord, is not after all the marvelous blossoming of all the virtues, each of which, while reaching its culminating point, forms together with all the others one harmonious whole. No, it is a something still more delicate, more human, which I seek but do not find in Him. For I seek sorrow for sin, the sad remembrance of past sins, and the sacred tears of repentance, the firm resolution to do better, all that side of the purely human conscience and will." All this is not, nor ever could be, in His Divine Sanctity. St. John declares that they who believe they are without sin, grossly deceive themselves.

St. Paul called himself "the chief of sinners, sold to sin, in whom there was no good." De Maistre used to say: "I do not know the heart of a villain, but I do know the heart of a good man: and I can assure you it is horrible!" Such is the language of all holy consciences. You cannot imagine a saint, even the greatest of all saints, ever being able to say: "I am holy and there is no sin in me." From the moment of saying those words his holiness would depart from him. He would fall from his pedestal, and his indignant conscience would snatch from him his former crown.

But here is the one being who can say: "I am holy," and Who did say: "Which of you shall convince Me of sin?" Here is a Man, the humblest, the purest, the most illuminated of all men, who fears not to say: "Be holy because I am holy." This strange and

oft repeated affirmation never dimmed the glory that shone about His Head. This Man who shows so lively a sentiment, so clear a knowledge of sin, that He spends His life crying in the streets and public places: "Be ye converted and do penance," this man, I say, never allows the slightest indication to fall from His lips that would show that He Himself needed pardon. He never strikes His breast, He never sheds tears of contrition, either in the garden or on Calvary. He never regrets one single thought or action. This conviction that Jesus had of the ineffable purity of His soul, was shared even by those of His contemporaries who were most intimately acquainted with Him. Indeed the more familiar they became with Him, the more did their admiration for Him increase.

His enemies themselves could not help revering Him. They spent their

time watching Him, laying snares for Him. If He had tripped but once, He would have been lost. But nothing of the sort happened. He goes His way through the streets of the city, surrounded by Pharisees lying in wait to catch Him in His speech, to find Him guilty of some wrong-doing, or even of some imperfection. The proof of how little they succeeded is that at last they were obliged to have recourse to false witnesses. He, serene and calm, passes in the midst of them, saying: "Which of you shall convince me of sin?" No one has ever been able to say such words before Him; nor will any ever be able to say them after Him.

The sanctity of Jesus was not only negative. Besides absolute exemption from sin there was the flowering of all the virtues. All the virtues are in Him. All reach their highest development in Him. All put forth flowers, fruit and

perfume to so sublime an extent, that the greatest efforts of the grandest saints will bring them no further than to a humble and far off following after Him. And one virtue does not obstruct another, each calls to each, producing lovely, unforeseen contrasts, which resolve themselves into the most exquisite harmony, and all without effort in perfect completeness. As in Him are never seen those moments in which man sometimes turns in upon himself, so also are never seen those other moments in which man raises himself above himself by an effort, which, while it ennobles him, cannot be of long duration. Christ rises without effort to the summit of the most exalted virtues; rather He does not rise for He is there in the most perfectly natural way. In this very naturalness, in this singular simplicity, His true originality consists.

John the Baptist is certainly one of the grandest souls that has ever existed. Our hearts are moved at the thought of this sublime penitent. But there is nothing original in him: he but carries on the prophetic type. He resembles Elias and Eliseus, his holiness is of the same order. With Jesus Christ all is different. He is not clothed with camel's hair, nor does He feed upon locusts or wild honey, nor are there in Him any fearful austerities. All is outwardly simple, natural, ordinary. But look within, and you will discover a virtue which easily surpasses all other virtue. There is the deepest foundation of humility, of detachment, of mortification, of contempt of the world, of charity towards men, of union with God, of all holiness, which at first sight seems nothing, but to which even the greatest saints must ever despair of reaching.

Then what is the cause, the source of a holiness so singular? It would seem that there must be in Jesus, in the most intimate depth of His Soul, an invisible Guest who never leaves Him. Speaking of this Divine Guest, He says: "I am not alone, because the Father is with me." (Jo. 16. 32.) Often too, He makes known to His disciples the mysterious bond that unites Him to the Invisible Being Who is more present to Him than the most intimate of His apostles. "I and the Father are one." (John 10. 30.) "As the Father knoweth me and I know the Father." . . . "He that seeth Me, seeth the Father also." . . . "Do you not believe that I am in the Father and the Father in Me? The words that I speak to you, I speak not of Myself. But the Father who abideth in Me, He doth the works." (John 14. 10.) And so on in many similar passages.

Of what relationship does He speak? What is this full and perpetual abiding of God within Him? Who shall explain it to us? Who can know it if not He? We have reached the Tabernacle. Are we in the Presence of God? Oh, Lord, open to us, speak to us and tell us Who Thou art! From the Gospel narrative we can obtain a magnificent conception of the singular holiness of Jesus. From It reverberate bright gleams of His Divinity; before it, prostrate on the ground, we cry: "Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God of Sabaoth." This is the exemplar given to us for our imitation. "Look and make it according to the pattern that was shewn thee in the mount." (Exod. 25. 40.)

At first sight the sublimity of the model terrifies you. But be comforted, ye fainthearted. When you propose to an artist that he should copy a picture

of Raphael or a statue of Michelangelo, you do not expect the copy to be of equal merit with the original. Certain it is though, that the more perfect the model the more valuable will be the work copied from it, even though the copy does not actually reach the perfection of the model.

Throughout this little book I have not said that we should copy only the grandest virtues of our Divine Model, but rather those which are commonly called the little virtues. These and no others did He Himself propose to us when He said: "Learn of Me, because I am meek and humble of heart." (Matt. 11. 28.) Jesus will be well pleased with us, He will count us among the number of His imitators, if we, following His example, are humble and meek, if we do not insist upon the point of honor, if we have a lowly opinion of ourselves, if we repress all inordinate affections

and do not give ourselves up to an easy, sensual life, if we see the will of God in everything and always love it, if for His sake we love our neighbor and help him both in body and in soul to the best of our ability, if we make devotion amiable and attractive. "Blessed are these little virtues" exclaims St. Francis of Sales; "blessed are these humble flowerets that grow at the foot of the Cross and are watered by the Blood of the Redeemer." From them are woven the crowns of the happy inmates of Heaven. If we find any difficulty in these things, let us turn for help to Jesus. Is He not pledged to help us in this work of imitating Him upon which depends our Eternal Salvation? Did He not come down from Heaven purposely to do so? Oh, yes, He, the most merciful, gladly came to suffer pains and outrages and death itself, to save His brethren from the

bottomless pit, and the dark prison. If notwithstanding His plenteous redemption we were doomed to perish, what profit would there be in His Blood and His tears? Oh, no! such a fate is not for His redeemed. He will bring them after their valiant struggle to the Heaven He has won for them, where they will join in "the shout of them that triumph, the song of them that feast." (St. Bernard's Hymn, Jerusalem.)

CHAPTER XVI

CONCLUSION

When Josue, the great captain, felt he had reached his last hour, he called unto him the elders and princes of the people and said to them: "I am old and far advanced in years:

And you see all that the Lord hath done to all the nations round about, how He himself has fought for you:

And now since He hath divided to you by lot all the land, from the east of the Jordan unto the great sea, and many nations yet remain:

The Lord your God will destroy them, and take them away from before your face, and you shall possess the land as He hath promised you. . . .

This only take care of with all diligence that you love the Lord your God. . . .

Behold this day I am going into the way of all the earth, and you shall know with all your mind that of all the words which the Lord promised to perform for you, not one hath failed. . . .

Only take courage and be careful to observe all things that are written in the book of the law of Moses: . . .

This only take care of with all diligence, that you love the Lord your God." . . . (Jos. 23. 2-14.)

"But if it seem evil to you to serve the Lord, you have your choice: choose this day that which pleaseth you, whom you would rather serve, whether the

gods which your fathers served in Mesopotamia, or the gods of the Amorrhites, in whose land you dwell: but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord.

And the people answered, and said: God forbid we should leave the Lord, and serve strange gods.

The Lord our God He brought us and our fathers out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage: and did very great signs in our sight, and preserved us in all the way by which we journeyed, and among all the people through whom we passed.

. . .

Therefore we will serve the Lord, for He is our God.

And Josue said to the people: You will not be able to serve the Lord: for He is a holy God, and mighty and jealous, and will not forgive your wickedness and sins.

If you leave the Lord, and serve strange gods, He will turn, and will afflict you, and will destroy you after all the good He hath done you.

And the people said to Josue: No, it shall not be so as thou sayest, but we will serve the Lord.

And Josue said to the people: You are witnesses, that you yourself have chosen you the Lord to serve Him. And they answered: We are witnesses!

Now therefore, said he, put away strange gods from among you, and incline your hearts to the Lord the God of Israel.

And the people said to Josue: We will serve the Lord our God, and we will be obedient to His commandments.

Josue therefore on that day made a covenant, and set before the people commandments and judgments in Sichem.

And he wrote all these things in the

volume of the law of the Lord: and he took a great stone, and set it under the oak that was in the sanctuary of the Lord.

And he said to all the people: Behold this stone shall be a testimony unto you, that it hath heard all the words of the Lord, which He hath spoken to you: lest perhaps hereafter you will deny it, and lie to the Lord your God.

And he sent the people away every one to their own possession." (Jos. 24. 15-28.)

Permit me, gentle reader, to speak to you words like those of Josue, in these last few pages of my little book.

The benefits the Lord has showered upon you in the past, the graces He is willing to grant you in the future, the titles He has to your faithful service, are great, remarkable, innumerable. Notwithstanding if His service seems to you too hard, say so openly this very

day, and declare at the same time who you would wish to serve instead of Him.

As for me I have made my choice. I will serve the Lord my God. If you also wish to set yourself to serve Him, beware, for He is a jealous God, He will tolerate no rivals. Down with those earthly idols, tread human respect underfoot, pluck from your heart all that savors of the world and the flesh. Away with all strange gods from your midst. Be true adorers of God, faithful imitators of Christ, for He is the only way that leads to the Father, and "incline your heart to the Lord God of Israel."

Verily do I believe that all my readers will repeat the cry of the people of Israel: "We will serve the Lord God!" And even more than from the lips, let the cry come from the heart. Hearken to the Lord who says to you: "Be holy, because I am

holy." (Lev. 11. 46.) In solemn homage to Jesus Christ proclaim Him aloud the Immortal King of ages, the supreme King of all men, no matter where they are, or what grandeur belongs to them.

Alas! the world will not acknowledge this universal supremacy of Jesus Christ. It seeks to free itself in every way from His dominion. In all that relates to civic life it will not have anything to do with Him. He is excluded from many other branches of the social order as though He were an encumbrance to be put aside. He is today like a master expelled from His own house, a King thrust from His throne. "We will not have this man to reign over us." (Luke 19. 14.)

He may reign in the hearts of individuals, in the secret intimacy of a few private families, but they will not tolerate His sway over cities or nations,

or in anything that appertains to civil life. And we on the contrary, desire that He should reign; we would bring Him back into His house, we would seat Him again upon His throne, and place the royal crown again upon His Head. We desire that our own time should bow down before the King of all time, and should acknowledge Him as its absolute and Universal Sovereign. We are moved to indignation by this social apostasy from Jesus Christ, and are weary of its deadly consequences.

Since the day when modern society has virtually bidden God to retire from its midst, God it would seem has taken up the challenge: "We would have cured Babylon, but she is not healed. Let us forsake her." (Jer. 51. 9.) He has forsaken her, giving her up to her reprobate sense, to her unbridled passions, to her arrogant spirit of independence. He has abandoned her

to the follies of naturalism, positivism and to all the other errors proclaimed from the chairs of teaching. He has abandoned her to wars, revolutions, freemasonry, socialism, anarchy, which threaten to overthrow her to her foundations. Finally He has abandoned her to herself, that she may see what she is able to do without Him, to force her to realize that "unless the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it." (Ps. 126. 1.)

We are weary of all these errors. We long for peace, tranquillity, order. To obtain them we shall work by every means to restore the Prince of Peace to His throne. To this end shall our prayers and our homage be offered. The voices of earth shall echo those of the Heavenly Jerusalem.

We also shall sing to the "Lamb standing as it were slain" . . . "because thou wast slain and hast re-

deemed" us to God in Thy Blood, out of every tribe and tongue and people and nation, and we shall join with the angels standing round about the throne of God "saying with a loud voice: The Lamb that was slain is worthy to receive power and divinity and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and benediction." And all creation whether in Heaven or earth or in the sea shall reply exulting together: "To Him that sitteth on the throne, and to the Lamb, benediction and honor and glory, and power forever and ever." (Apoc. 5. 9. 13.)

Can the sweet Heart of Jesus be deaf to the clamor of these voices mingled together and raised to Him in prayer and praise? Surely we may look forward to serener days for the Church. When the sighing of His Spouse mingled with these hymns of praise shall rise up to His loving Heart,

will He hold out against Her? Rather will He not be constrained to say to Her: "I, I myself will comfort you . . . arise, arise, stand up, O Jerusalem, which hast drunk at the hand of the Lord, the cup of His wrath. . . . Therefore hear this, thou poor little one, and thou that art drunk, but not with wine: Thus saith Thy Sovereign the Lord, and thy God who will fight for His people. Behold, I have taken out of thy hand the cup of dead sleep, the dregs of the cup of my indignation; thou shalt not drink it again any more." (Is. 51. 12. 21. 22.)

And the clouds so long heavy and lowering, will be rolled away and the sky will be serene, and a smile of joy will light up the earth, which has at last acknowledged her Divine King. "The Lord hath reigned, let the earth rejoice: let many islands be glad." (Ps. 96. 1.)

The first signs of such a happy change already brighten the horizon. The nations of the earth, drawn by successive Jubilees to the throne of Peter say to one another: "Come, and let us go up to the Mountain of the Lord, and to the house of the God of Jacob, and He will teach us His ways, and we will walk in His paths." Let us go to the tomb of the Apostles, to the rock of the Vatican. There sits the Master who will speak to us the word of the Lord, "for the law shall come forth from Sion, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem." (Is. 2. 3.)

Little by little errors and prejudices shall be removed, truth shall find its way into the minds and hearts of many, the glory of the Church shall more brightly shine forth, and many who had looked upon her with suspicion, will cast themselves with confidence into her maternal arms. "Arise, arise, put on

thy strength, O Sion! put on the garments of thy glory." (Is. 52. 1.) "Lift up thy eyes round about and see, all these are gathered together, they are come to thee; thy sons shall come from afar and thy daughters shall rise up at thy side." (Is. 60. 4.) O Mother! fear not if rebellious sons are still intent on preparing fresh battles for thee. Arise and brave them, for thou art strong in the might of thy Spouse and King, who to the end of time will ever fight side by side with thee.

But this desired triumph, this restoration of the reign of Christ, requires our active co-operation. Do we honestly desire it? Then let us begin by ourselves; let Jesus Christ reign first of all within our own souls. Have we no need of this reign within us? Has His reign in us undergone no diminution? Has the infected air of the world which

we breathe already begun to undermine our health, perhaps even to threaten our lives? Let us therefore set to work in earnest to make ourselves true Christians, that thus we may undertake the task of making true Christians of others.

And first then for ourselves. We must abstain from sharing in the works of the wicked. If all good people did indeed refrain from sharing in the works of the wicked, according to the admonition of the Apostle: "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness" (Eph. 5. 11), these would soon be weakened and sterilized. But the mischief is, that even the good give support to the wicked and help them in giving to our Christian towns an altogether pagan aspect. It is we, many of us indeed, who, while deploring the profanation of the Sunday, spend our money in shops notoriously guilty of

this profanation, perhaps because in them we find finer laces, or richer and more fashionable materials.

We condemn the secularization of the government schools, and yet to save a little money, we send our children to them. We complain of the immorality of the theaters, but we give them the countenance of our presence, it may be, even in Lent. The voice of such and such a singer, the pirouettes of such and such a dancer, make us disregard any graver consideration. In Catholic congresses and in public conferences, we condemn and brand bad literature, and then instead of taking in the good Catholic newspapers, we take in and study the infidel and anti-Catholic ones, paying them money for the blasphemies and poison with which they feed us.

We inculcate the duty of encouraging Catholics in their various professions and arts, and then to further some

miserable interest of our own, we employ Liberals, so that it would appear as if we could find no one capable of any good work or thing among Catholics. Nor is this all. Even we, so called Clericals, we promoters of good works, sometimes from human respect, sometimes from curiosity or from some other frivolous motive, swell the ranks of the Liberals and of the irreligious, by going to their public festivals, or their lay funerals, or their irreligious demonstrations of one kind and another. Hence these Liberals and others plume themselves upon their success, and cry out: "See what a multitude follows us; we have the whole country with us!" They are strengthened by our support, indirect though it be, and so appear more numerous than they really are.

But if we, walking up to the consciousness of our own dignity and duty,

were to retire from them, what a void would at once be made in their ranks. Therefore, I repeat, the reformation of society must begin with ourselves. We must reform our lives by the rules of the Christian spirit. Let the Kingdom of Christ be rooted and well founded in us and in our families. This will be the first step towards obtaining the reign of Jesus Christ in the whole of society both civil and political.

Catholic activity well disciplined, united to fervent and constant prayer, will do the remainder.

Jesus Christ, mindful of His great mercy and of His power, will in the sight of all nations take up His sceptre anew, will crown Himself and make all the earth acknowledge Him as its universal Lord and Master. "For I am the Lord," as He declared by the mouth of the Prophet, "and I change not." (Mal. 3. 6.) The earth will then

reverently adore Him, and Heaven will hold high festival in His Name.

No doubt, time will be needed before this happy event takes place, but meanwhile let us who already love Him and serve Him, prostrate ourselves before His throne, in humblest adoration, acclaiming Him before all the world: "Tu solus sanctus, to solus Dominus, to solus altissimus, Jesu Christe!" (Gloria in excelsis.)

And now go, little book, to join company with your elder brother: "Jesus All Good." It paved the way for you, opening all hearts to loving confidence in Jesus. More easily now can you enter into these hearts to teach them the Imitation of "Jesus All Holy." Imitation is not so sweet or so easy as confidence; your voice may not therefore be so pleasing as that of your predecessor. Nevertheless I hope that hand in hand, you will both do some

little good to the souls that Jesus loves; and so I leave you imploring upon you both the Blessing of "Jesus all good and all holy!"